TALAASH

A SEARCH FOR THE TRUE MEANING OF LIFE

by

AiR

Discover Your True Self

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

TALAASH

A Search for the True Meaning of Life

By

AiR

Copyright © AiR Foundation 2016
AiR asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this book.

All rights reserved.

No part of the content (of this publication except images) may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Printed in India by **Navya Graphics,** Bangalore.

Not This,

Not This.

Thou Art That!

FOREWORD

J. P. VASWANI **SADHU VASWANI MISSION,**
10, Sadhu Vaswani Path,
Pune – 411001.

Today man stands on a planet of limitless promise. He has been able to set his foot on the moon. His rockets go flying past the distant planets. He has been able to station satellites in space. He is eager to control the forces of Nature. But he has not learnt the lesson of self-control. His anger flares easily. He becomes an easy victim to temptations of flesh. The civilization he has built is crumbling beneath the burden of his own weight.

The author of this small book believes that a new civilization needs to be built. I have known him – Ravi Melwani (AiR) – over the years. His emphasis is not on words but on life.

I shall not speak, I shall not talk
With all my strength, I shall still walk
The way that leadeth to the Lord.

May this little book inspire many hearts to live the life that is life indeed – the life of simplicity and sympathy and service, of new awakening and self-realization.

J. P. Vaswani

PREFACE

I was the happiest man on Earth.

My life experienced 25 years of achievement, success, wealth, happiness, name, fame and everything that one could dream of!

Then one day, it suddenly occurred to me – what is life all about? Is life just about making money? Or is there more to life?

We earn and earn only for others to burn what we earn. Is life beyond making money? I found that happiness doesn't come from making money but rather from spending it. So, instead of making more money, I stopped, shut down my business and decided to make a difference instead. I decided to live a life of fulfillment instead of living a life of achievement. I decided to let peace and tranquility take me to contentment and fulfillment.

My life was transformed…

For 8 years, I lived an amazing life, travelling from one country to another and spending my money doing humanitarian, inspirational and spiritual work. My life was absolutely amazing, peaceful, tranquil, joyous and fulfilling. How could somebody be happier than me? Not only did I have pleasure, I had success, contentment, fulfillment, liberation, tranquility and peace. I felt like I was in a state of absolute bliss.

To me, after working for 25 years to achieve success, these 8 years were a reward. I thought my life was

absolutely fantastic!

But then something happened…

After 8 years, my Guru questioned me, "What is the true purpose of life – the true meaning of life?" He provoked me to go on a search – a *Talaash.*

At that time, for me, life was all about happiness. In fact, the goal of life was happiness, and while I had achieved happiness first through pleasure and then through peace, I definitely felt that there was something missing in my life. It seemed like I was on a plateau of happiness and there was no further peak. I found that my life had no purpose!

I went into deep introspection and asked myself if there was a third peak of happiness, the first peak being Achievement and the second Fulfillment, and as if from nowhere an answer came to me! Yes, there is a third peak of Happiness called Enlightenment! Now was it time for another transformation – a second one? I packed up my life and decided to climb the third peak.

In this book, I share my journey and my search for the third peak and for the true meaning of life. How I discovered *Ananda,* everlasting joy beyond Achievement and Fulfillment – the Bliss that knows no bounds.

Let's start the journey!

'GU' means darkness,
and 'RU' means light.
GURU literally means
"the one who brings you from
darkness to light".

IN GRATITUDE, TO MY GURU

This Search, this Quest, this Talaash would never happen if it was not for my Guru, my mentor, my guide, my God on Earth Dada J.P. Vaswani.

Dada held my hand 25 years back and has never let go since. He was my teacher, my family, my friend; he was everything. Only in retrospect, I realize what would I be without him. When I started, he was just my spiritual teacher, a person whom I wanted to learn from. But over the years, he became my best friend. He became my soul mate. He became everything to me. Least did I know that my spiritual evolution would be because of him. From 1990, when I met him, to 2006, I didn't realize that he was leading me to a new life. He took me from achievement to fulfillment, making my life content and joyous like never before. He transformed my life. He led me from a mundane life of just making money to a purposeful life of making a difference. But that was just the first step. Least did I know what my Master had in mind for me. I was an ugly caterpillar, but he had a vision that I should be a beautiful butterfly. He let me evolve, change, grow and transform. Not just a transformation but a double transformation, a metamorphosis. In the last 2 years, he led me on this Talaash, this Search. He is the one who provoked me, prompted me, and guided me. All that is written in this book, every single word has been inspired by him. I wouldn't have been able to write a single line without his guidance, without his grace. Like I said, he is not my mentor, my guide, my Guru, he is my God on Earth!

I am indebted to Dada for showing me the path that has led me to this realization of the truth which I am trying to share with you.

Thank you Dada.
With Love and Gratitude
AiR

Know where you want to go.

Go where you want to go.

INDEX

Chapter 1	**In Search of Happiness**	**1**
Chapter 2	**Happiness is not just about being Rich**	**7**
Chapter 3	**The Three Peaks of Life**	**15**
Chapter 4	**Questions that had no Answers**	**21**
Chapter 5	***Talaash*…A Search, A Quest…**	**27**
Chapter 6	**Learnings – About Life & Beyond**	**35**
Chapter 7	**Stories that lead to the Truth!**	**85**
Chapter 8	**Analogies**	**103**
Chapter 9	**Guru and God**	**119**
Chapter 10	**Science & Spirituality**	**129**
Chapter 11	**Putting it all Together**	**137**
Chapter 12	**Post the Realization**	**153**
Chapter 13	**Living as a Realized Seeker**	**167**
Chapter 14	**Glimpses of the Search**	**175**

CHAPTER 01

IN SEARCH OF HAPPINESS

The whole world is seeking happiness. Who does not want to be happy?

Different things make different people happy, but ultimately while we all may be seeking different things, the final goal of humanity seems to be "HAPPINESS".

What is Happiness? While the question is very simple, the answer is profound. Though the question is one, the answers are many. This is because happiness is different for different people!

Happiness is a state of mind, expressing itself with emotions of cheer, joy, and excitement. It is a feeling that makes one's heart dance and eyes twinkle. A happy person smiles just like an unhappy person shows sorrow in his face. So, while different people define their happiness in different words, the emotion that is born in all is the same. It is a strong feeling of joy, pleasure, contentment, and fulfillment.

Everybody wants to be happy. But how does one become happy? While different things create happiness, most of it is fulfilling of an expectation. A millionaire could be happy making his next million. A teacher may find happiness in the examination results of the students. A singer is joyous when the audience applauds. Politicians become happy when they win an election. While there are different reasons to be happy for different people, it is mostly unfulfilled expectations that lead to misery.

As kids, simple things make us happy – a ball or a doll. But as we grow up, our idea of happiness becomes more complicated. We seek pleasures, achievement, romance, and most importantly money and security.

People generally think that money is the key source of happiness, and hence, they chase money. They do anything and everything possible to make money because they believe that "Money = Happiness".

I was no different. At the age of 16, I joined my father's business – wanting to be successful, an achiever. I dreamt that this would make me truly happy.

Whatever I touched turned to gold. As a teenager, I started with an advertising business, and from the profits, I bought my first car. What a joy! It gave me a kick that pushed me on. This was just the beginning of my success story. My achievement lasted years, each surpassing my previous success – taking me from one peak of pleasure to another! Success became a passion, just as making money was my obsession.

But people don't stop at success. First, we fulfill our need, and next, greed takes over. Then, we yearn for more success, more money, and more happiness. It doesn't matter whether it comes from fair or foul means. To one on such a journey, nothing else matters.

I too didn't stop. First, it was Kids Kemp, which was my first retail store, then Big Kids Kemp, and finally Kemp Fort. The exhilaration that came from success and achievement made

me work 18 hours a day and 7 days a week, and yet I felt that I was not working at all. It was just fun!

Yes! When success pushes you forward, you forget everything else. The joy, the pleasure, and the achievement are enough to power you forward unconditionally. In that pursuit for excellence, you forget everything else, except the achievement, success, and joy you get from your victories.

Everything I did, gave me joy. The marketing was a big success, and it drew crowds that the retailing industry had never seen before. This gave me tremendous confidence. The sales and profits created success that gave me happiness – the heights of which I had never experienced.

I thought I was happy, truly happy! My achievement and my success were my happiness. I couldn't see further.

When people get intoxicated with wealth, they even let go of their health. Such is the tragedy of the world.

Success creates more success, and it makes one feel that they are becoming happier each day. Seeing one's bank balance grow or watching one's assets swell can be truly satisfying when one is on this journey of happiness – a journey of achievement where the peak is the sky, which has no limit.

I too was one of them, going from achievement to achievement and enjoying the joy of success. My success made me famous. The media coverage was a big high. For the first time, I was recognized by the city, the country. That was a great feeling.

It made me truly happy – so happy that it kept me going for 25 years, seeking pleasures that came with success and achievement. To me, that was life – the way to be happy!

I travelled to the West and brought western concepts to India. Innovative retail entertainment clicked, and I bubbled with joy as the cash in my bank over flowed. I had never dreamt of this kind of money. I had never imagined that I would become so rich. It gave me immense pleasure to buy a new car, and I cannot express the joy that comes from driving a Mercedes or travelling in a Limousine or zooming in a Sera with doors that opened into the sky. The attention that I received lifted my ego. I felt truly great as I revelled in the success that I had created.

People become happier as they become more famous. Such is ego. It lights the pride that gets attention from all over the world. Sometimes it might make us arrogant, but how does it matter? As long as we are happy, who cares?

While my achievement journey got me immense pleasure, I realized that it was not true happiness…. It was all about pleasure that came from success and achievement.

Most of the world also think that "Happiness = Success and Achievement". Little does this majority know that after all, this is just the first peak of happiness!

If Happiness always
depended on what we had,
then the richest would
always be Glad, not Sad.

CHAPTER 02

HAPPINESS IS NOT JUST ABOUT BEING RICH

Is money equal to happiness?

No. If it was, then everyone who was rich would be glad, not sad. Unfortunately, if we look around, the lives of many of the rich and famous are riddled with problems, misery, and even suicide. Surely, happiness is not solely dependent on wealth. Yes, happiness is the goal of life, but happiness is not just about being rich. It is a myth that ONLY money makes people happy.

Not everybody wants money to be happy. Some may seek happiness in other forms of achievement be it sports, art or literature. Artists and sportsmen are also passionate about success that is ultimately nothing else but happiness. Even a politician is seeking happiness through his achievement in public life. But to each of them, money, wealth, and achievement are very important. It seems like their ultimate goal of life is achievement, money, success, wealth, and eventually happiness.

Material pleasures, of course, make us happy, but do they create unending pleasure? Such pleasures could make us happy for the moment, but they fail to create fulfillment or grant us the peace of mind that takes us to the true peak of happiness.

A few are fortunate to transcend from achievement to fulfillment, to stop seeking happiness from pleasure, and to live a life of contentment and fulfillment in peace and tranquility. In most cases, making money is such an

addictive habit that the achievers forget that there is also something called – Making a Difference.

How does it matter? Even I was making money. It was just money, money and more money – whether it meant to have deposits in the bank, gold that glittered, or properties and assets that made ones net worth sparkle. We become blind to everything else in the chase to make money.

However, I was fortunate that my success opened new doors that gave me more happiness and more joy than money ever did.

I started serving the poor on the streets of Bangalore. In the nights, I would take food packets and distribute to the people who were hungry, sleeping on the streets, or distribute blankets to these people freezing in the chill winter. This gave me a very different kind of happiness, a joy that I realized money couldn't buy. I was still making money and enjoying the exhilaration of success. But I was fortunate that my humanitarian heart gave me more quality happiness from the compassionate work that I was doing.

There are people in this world whose happiness does not stem from wealth. To them, making a difference is far more rewarding than making money. They would make magnanimous contributions to service groups rather than invest in personal assets. These are very few who are fortunate to realize that happiness is not just about being rich.

All these years, there were seeds of compassion and

inspiration in me, but I was racing down the achievement track to be happy. By now, my retail stores were generating more profits than I could spend. No doubt, I was extremely happy, but there was no peace. Life of success is a life of problems because achievements attract more challenges than one can imagine.

I was just going to embark upon a new project called Kemp City envisaged on 200 acres of land, with an amusement park, a casino, a golf course, hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, and everything one could dream of. It would be connected to the city via helicopters and special shuttles. But then… the question came to my mind, "How would this improve the quality of my life?" What would it gain a man if he gained the whole world, but lost his own soul! I realized that achievement and wealth were important, but it was not everything.

Suddenly, one day after 25 years of achievement and success, I shut down my business and decided that I would make a difference rather than just make money. I had experienced joy doing humanitarian work and serving people on the streets. It gave me great excitement to inspire people to live rather than just exist. Praying and building a connection with God gave me peace and tranquility that was blissful. While pursuing success, achievement, wealth, and happiness, there was no time left to pursue my passion of doing H.I.S work – Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work. I called it a day. I shut down my business and transformed my life! I even changed my name from Ravi V. Melwani to RVM and created a new RVM Philosophy – Rejoice, Value Life, and Make a Difference. I suddenly felt that life was so much more

fulfilling! I was blissfully content.

Many people work like machines. It seems like life is a journey of achievement rushing from womb to tomb. They know that the money is not theirs. What they earn, others will burn, but even then, their only priority is to be rich and wealthy.

Blessed are the few who realize that the first peak of life is achievement, but one must transcend and evolve to the second peak – the peak of contentment and fulfillment. A journey that seeks fulfillment is more blissful and has more peace and tranquility than a journey of achievement.

For 8 years, I enjoyed this fulfillment journey traveling from one country to another discovering the wondrous creations of God. My journeys took me from Iceland to Antarctica, Alaska to Australia, and I thought, "Could there be a happier man on the Earth than me?"

Yes! Those who are content and fulfilled are far happier than most of the multi-millionaires of the world because while money can buy pleasures, it cannot buy true happiness. Where does a wealthy man enjoy peace, tranquility, joy, and liberation? He is just programmed to earn money and more money till the journey of life ends. Success becomes a drug. One who succeeds can't do without it. We keep wanting more success, more success, and more success, thinking that more success equals more happiness.

But those who are fortunate to find the second peak are blessed. They transcend from pleasure to peace. They move from Achievement to Fulfillment. Their life also is about success but it is beyond. It is not just about making money. It is also about making a difference. They find something that the achievers don't. They find bliss that comes from contentment and fulfillment. Those who climb the second peak of life are thus far happier.

What is the second peak of Fulfillment all about? What creates happiness which is beyond the happiness that achievement and success creates?

What is Fulfillment? It can be understood as -

F - Full Satisfaction and Contentment
U - Universal Connection
L - Living with Meaning and Purpose
F - Faith, Hope and Surrender
I - Inspiration, Energy and Enthusiasm
L - Liberation and Freedom
L - Laughter and Love
M - Making a Difference
E - Emotionally Positive
N - Noteworthy Success and Achievement
T - Tranquility and Peace

One who lives life with fulfillment, contentment, with connection, meaning and purpose, surrender, enthusiasm, energy, freedom, laughter, love, positivity,

peace…how can such a person not be truly happy? How can a person still be wanting?

I too was on that peak for 8 years, in Bliss! However, after 25 years of achievement and 8 years of fulfillment, I questioned myself, "Have I not reached a plateau? Undoubtedly, I have all the pleasures the world can offer and I also live a life of peace. But does my life have a real PURPOSE?"

When I decided to climb down from the peak of achievement by closing my business, I was apprehensive. What if I lose my happiness as I give up success and making money? I had trusted my sixth sense and the advice of my mentor, only to be rewarded with contentment and fulfillment. Now, I was provoked again and the question that came to my mind was – Why should I embark upon another journey when I am so blissfully content and happy? I have everything that I have ever dreamt of. Is there need for another search, a second transformation? The trigger from my mentor kept haunting me and the question arose – What is the purpose of life? Will I just live like this till I die?

While I had started thinking on these lines, I had not left the fulfillment peak. I was living in a comfort zone – blissfully content and in peace and tranquility – with love, laughter, liberation, and freedom. I even asked myself the question: I am doing such amazing work – making a difference through reducing pain and suffering, vibrating positive energy, and making people believers – then why must I rock the boat?

There was a tug of war between my mind and my conscience. My mind refused to think further about life and its true

purpose. But my conscience pricked me to delve deeper into the meaning of life.

And so did my Guru, who provoked me to seek the next peak. He urged me to go on a search, a Quest – a Talaash....

CHAPTER 03

THE THREE PEAKS OF LIFE

Before plunging into a Talaash – a Search or a Quest, I pondered about life and its peaks that I came across: Achievement and then Fulfillment. Then, I wondered if it would take me to another peak – the third and the ultimate one!

What is life? It is a journey, an experience on Earth, that is not permanent but a temporary one. We all start this journey, and during the journey, we all search for happiness. Different people follow different philosophies in life. While people and their philosophies are very different, one thing does not change – the whole of humanity is seeking Happiness.

People evolve in their journey of life by climbing through peaks of life, the first peak being **Achievement.**

To be happy, we grow up to seek the first peak that is **Achievement.** We believe success creates wealth that generates happiness. There are many by-products like name, fame, assets, security, power, possessions, and pleasures that together create the joy that comes from **Achievement.** But what is the end to the **Achievement** journey? There is no end to this journey. Most of the people go from womb to tomb in this journey of life. They focus on achievement right from the moment they get a command of their life until their last breath. They keep on chasing achievement after achievement.

Though one achieves a lot in this first peak of life, they truly don't discover life because after drinking the

nectar of life, they still remain thirsty. Their needs are fulfilled, but their greed continues to create stress and anxiety. The millionaire becomes a billionaire only to face death. He then loses his entire wealth as he leaves the world. The rich and famous lose their health to make wealth, but it is very funny that in the end, they leave back all their money. They never had time to follow their passions to do what they had always dreamt of. Recently, a rich man died uttering these words: "If only I had spend my life spending my money rather than just making it, I would have died a happier man".

While the peak of **Achievement** is all about being richer in terms of more pleasure, power, and possessions, people generally miss the sight of the second peak – the peak of **Fulfillment,** which is beyond the pleasure that one gets on the journey to the peak of **Achievement.**

There are a very few people who realize that life is not just about making money. They realize that happiness does not come only from achievement, riches, and pleasures. They know that true happiness comes from contentment and fulfillment. They understand that true happiness comes from being content with what we need and not lighting a fire to fulfill our greed. People who are lucky to take an exit from the highway of **Achievement** find true peace and tranquility by being content and fulfilled on the peak of **Fulfillment.** Such a person's life is filled with positivity, laughter, and joy. They would have liberation and freedom, living with

meaning and purpose in their life. They do not focus on making money; instead they would want to make a difference. To them, life is blissful because they do not have too many expectations and therefore no disappointments or misery. The life of such people is much happier than that of those who aggressively try to climb the peak of **Achievement.**

Therefore, the second peak after **Achievement** is the peak of **Fulfillment.** There may be a few who are fortunate to by-pass the peak of **Achievement** because they realize the truth that the true peak of life is not **Achievement,** but it is **Fulfillment!** They take an exit at an early age and move on to the peak of **Fulfillment,** and they are content. They are happy with what life gives them. Therefore, they progress in the journey of life with contentment and fulfillment, without the hassle of passing the **Achievement** peak.

*I realized this, and I transformed my life from the first peak of **Achievement** to the second peak of **Fulfillment.** My life was so blissful. I always wished that the rich and wealthy realized the joy that lies beyond just making money.*

*However, after being on the **Fulfillment** plateau for 8 years, living blissfully content, I started asking, "Is this all? Is this what life is all about?" The answer that came to me was a resounding "No" as after climbing the peak of **Achievement** and **Fulfillment,** my life was still not complete. The purpose of life was still not achieved. While **Achievement** gave pleasures and **Fulfillment** gave peace, I had still not achieved*

a purpose in life. It seemed like the second peak became a plateau. I was just sailing, cruising on the seas of ***Fulfillment.*** *There seemed to be no purpose in life. Why was I alive?*

Yes, I felt that I finished climbing the peaks of ***Achievement*** *and* ***Fulfillment,*** *and though I was enjoying my life, there was no growth. It was just like a "zoom to my tomb". I asked myself, "Was I just waiting to die?" Of course, I am happy, but why am I alive? What is my purpose of being alive? These questions made me think and think until one day, my mentor, my Guru provoked me and asked me "We are no better than dead souls. We live, but in reality, we don't live. We just exist. We don't know the purpose of life. We don't seek answers to life's unanswered questions. We just live till we die, but is this what life is all about?"*

I realized that it was time to climb this third peak of life - a peak called ***Enlightenment!*** *I searched for answers. What could this third peak be? And then I got a flash!*

It was then clear to me that beyond the peaks of ***Achievement*** *and* ***Fulfillment,*** *there was a third peak – the peak of* ***Enlightenment*** *that was not a part of my vision, and hence I had not thought of climbing that peak. I had no doubt anymore. I was clear that I should stop and find out the answers to these questions. I was happy, but so what? Was life's goal just to be happy? I felt that there was a bigger goal in life. It was to find the true meaning and the true purpose of life – a revelation that would lead me beyond happiness to ultimate never-ending joy and bliss!*

How can you Get what you Want
if you do not Know
what you are Seeking?

CHAPTER 04

QUESTIONS THAT HAD NO ANSWERS

Very few people in this world actually ask questions; not many are true seekers. If I look around, people pray to God, but they don't question who is God, what is God, and where is God. They just pray to God because everybody is praying. They have grown up believing in God. They follow certain rituals because millions follow the same. They give in to some superstitions because they are made to believe that this is the way it works.

But how many people question what they do? How many people actually stop to ask, to get answers, to get explanations, and to understand the meaning of life and all that life is about.

To me, at the age of 48, after 25 years of Achievement and 8 years of Fulfillment, I stopped. I decided that it was time to move from the plateau of Fulfillment, to go down the valley – a valley that would start from scratch, a valley that had no answers but that had questions – questions that would fuel me to think, questions that would provoke me to read and to talk to masters, to browse, and to talk to God. I decided to search and to find the answers – What is the true meaning of life?

While I was living in bliss, in peace, and in joy, travelling around the world, I asked myself the questions: "What is life?" "What is the purpose of life?" "Where did I come from?" "My birth was a gift from my mother and father, but how did they come about?" "How did my forefathers come about?"

What came first – the chicken or the egg? If one says chicken, then the next question arises: "Where did the chicken come from?" Of course, the egg! But where did the egg come from? If the egg came first, then there must have been a chicken. Where did that chicken come from? Do we have answers? The tree came from the seed, but the seed came from the tree – so what came first? What is this whole mystery about creation? How were we born? The process may be known to us, but life is still a mystery!

What happens at death? The power leaves the body. The body lies limp and lifeless. We cremate or bury it. But who has actually left? Is it the physical body that has died or has the life inside escaped? Normally, we refer to death as one has "gone" or "passed away" while the body still remains in front of us. So what has actually happened at death? Does anybody have answers?

Is there something like heaven and hell? If yes, then where are they exactly located and how can one reach there? Are they somewhere on Earth or physical domains in outer space? Where is God? We know that this whole universe is the creation of a power we call God but – Who is this God? Where is God? What is God? People talk of God, and there are millions of Gods around the world. Ultimately, who is God? Are there many Gods, or is there just one God?

Is there a law of cause and effect just like the law of

gravity? Is there a law that rewards and punishes people according to their actions? Many a time, good things happen to bad people just as bad things happen to good people. So, do we get results of our good deeds in this lifetime or in a life beyond? Is there a life beyond? Is there rebirth?

What is the mystery of death and rebirth? How are we reborn? Of course, we are born, and it seems that our actions decide where and how we are born. Otherwise, why is it that a small child is born handicapped? Why would creation give so much suffering to a young child? Is it because this child had something called Karma – which is the actions of the previous life nullified in this current life? Does such a law of cause and effect actually exist – according to which if you plant tomatoes, you will get only tomatoes, not strawberries?

Are we the body, the mind, and the intellect, or are we the soul? What is the true reality of our existence? Does anybody have any proof of what we truly are?

What is the meaning of Enlightenment? I hear these words – Enlightenment, *Moksha, Nirvana,* and *Liberation*, but what is the meaning?

These questions provoked my mind to think! When I pondered upon them – questions on Karma, rebirth, the purpose of life, and Enlightenment - there seemed to be 9 major questions that didn't have any answer, but were now challenging me!

1. What is life? Where do we come from?
2. What is death? Where will we go after death?
3. Who is God, where is God, and what is God?
4. Is heaven and hell real?
5. Is there life after death?
6. Is there a Soul? What is it?
7. What is the law of Karma? Is it real?
8. What is the purpose of life?
9. What is Enlightenment?

With these questions, it suddenly seemed that I was starting a new quest. It is not that I lacked anything. I had achieved all the success I wanted, and I lived blissfully. But the thirst for the true meaning and the true purpose of life made it clear that the philosophy of my life needed to be refreshed, to be reset. It was a challenge, and like most seekers who start this journey of understanding life, I took the first step!

"Ask and it will be given to you.
Seek and you will find.
Knock and the door will be
opened to you."

CHAPTER
05

TALAASH... A SEARCH, A QUEST...

My *Talaash* or "search" actually started in August 2013 when my Guru asked, "What is the purpose of life? Is life just meant to live and die, or is there a deeper meaning to life?" This got me thinking. I had achieved so much success, name, fame, and money. In fact, I had achieved everything I wanted! Despite all the pleasures, I could not escape the questions that life was throwing at me.

There were a few turning points in this phase of life. I stumbled upon the word "Enlightenment" as the third peak of happiness and began to understand that achievement and fulfillment were just little hills as compared to this enlightenment mountain of joy, bliss, and peace. I didn't know much about it. But the knowledge acquired by reading revealed to me that one should progress on the journey of self-realization and God realization. I wondered what more was there to realize about self and God. I am what I am, and God is what God is. And thus, I was just going round in circles.

But then, when my Guru, my Master, was also provoking me, something intuitive made me do something very strange. I decided to stop doing everything else. I would only search for answers to the 9 questions that had confronted me. I suddenly became passionate about finding the true purpose of life. It was my obsession to find if the third peak of joy actually existed. I didn't know what it meant, but I was led into this third journey.

I lived in a beautiful office, surrounded by wonderful people and some amazing animals – dogs, ducks, rabbits, geese, birds, and fish. One evening when I returned from a meeting, I was shocked to find that about 50 beautiful fish that used to circle around my office in a tiny pond were all dead. I wondered what happened. I asked everybody and received some lame answers and reasons. I concluded that I couldn't diagnose the cause of their death. And I learnt that nothing could stop death from happening and that except for God, no one could control death.

I went to my library and started looking for some spiritual books. Over the last 33 years, I have created a library of a few thousand books. I came across a book on Gautama Buddha and his life and teachings. While reading it, I picked up some amazing truths that Buddha had stated. Buddha taught that this world is ultimately suffering and no one could escape from this suffering. He analyzed that anybody who is born must die. The life journey included growing, but then in most cases, one would decay because of disease or just die. He believed that life was a cycle of death and rebirth, and that this cycle was checkered with unavoidable suffering. There was only one way to escape from this cycle of death and birth. Buddha called it *Nirvana.* I was impressed and inspired by Buddha's concept of *Nirvana,* but didn't know how to get there.

I was a staunch believer in God, and for nearly 40 years, I would go to the temple every Monday and fast the

whole day, expressing my devotion and love for God. Over the last few months, I found myself talking to the statue in the temple and asking, "My God, where are You?" "How do I communicate with You?" "How do I come to You?" "I want to express my gratitude; You have given me everything." Then, as if by magic, a voice spoke to me and made me understand that God was a power that was beyond human comprehension. I learned about spirituality and realized that religions and the Gods of the world were created for humanity to accept and believe in a God. I understood that it would be so difficult for children to believe in a formless God. I accepted the reasoning, but I was challenged by a bigger question: "Where was God, who was God, and what was God?"

By now, my life journey seemed to be evolving and getting ready for another transformation. My passion was on fire. I delegated all my work to my second in command and actively started searching for the third peak – the peak I have now titled as **Enlightenment.** The Hindus called it *Moksha,* the Buddhists call it *Nirvana,* and the spiritualists call it Enlightenment, whereas men of the world called it Liberation.

This pushed me further into my search, my *Talaash.* It got me thinking more about birth. Of course, I was biologically born to my parents, but who put life into me? If my parents gave birth to me and they were born of their parents, then what was the ultimate source of life? I pondered on the classic example of what came

first – the chicken or the egg? I started enjoying my research. It was kind of exciting, challenging, and provoking in many ways. I suddenly realized that the whole world seemed to be following mythology and that the entire humanity was so busy in the world that they had no time to ask questions and find out the truth about life and creation.

People believed in God, but it seemed to be a very shallow belief. People either believed in a statue, a name, a form, a religion, or a scripture. All of these didn't answer the ultimate question of who God is and where God is. All the religions accepted God, but they only taught people theology up to the kindergarten level; then after that, people just believed in a God! Questions of life still remain unanswered.

Life is too short – the average life span today being 75 years. Very few people had the time or inclination to search for the truth. Some were lucky enough to contact a Master, a Guru, or a Mentor who would initiate them on this path. A few would stumble upon a book or a simple thing like meditation that would make them spend time in silence and introspection, while the majority would just live and die, thinking that the goal of life was to be happy, to be good, and to help others. As long as they were giving 10% of their earnings to charity, they were convinced that they would go to heaven. I increased my pace to win the race of spiritual knowledge. Whatever I had done in the last 33 years, I had succeeded. I now challenged myself to decode the

Enlightenment mystery.

What is self-realization?
What is God-realization?

I wanted to jump into it all to find the true purpose of life and to find the truth about God. For once, I was convinced that the God I thought of as God was not the ultimate God. God was beyond! It was Lord Shiva, the God I believed in for 40 years. But that was not the end. I believed in Lord Shiva, my God. I loved him more than anything else. I still do – only, even more. But my conscience and intellect refuse to accept the fact that He was just a statue or this *Yogi* sitting with a snake around Him, a tiger under Him, and a river flowing from His head. I was flabbergasted! How did I quietly believe this for over 40 years? Of course, it was great to believe in a God. But as mythology says, did Lord Shiva decapitate His son in anger and then later place the head of a powerful elephant and breathe life to his son, who also became a God to whom the world prays to?

At first, I felt embarrassed to even think of these things. But I realized the truth. This was just mythology – a myth, a story that our forefathers and sages created for humanity to believe in God. I realized the importance of a statue and the rituals and superstitions. How else would children be taught about God, and if children did not believe in a God, the society would be full of atheists. Thus, my personal disgust turned into humble appreciation for the religions that tried to create

believers who had faith in God.

My life was evolving. By now I realized that my *Talaash,* my search, needed more concrete information. Beyond knowledge, it needed the grace of God and the help of my Guru, my Mentor, and other Masters.

I accelerated my *Talaash* and in a way departed from my **Fulfillment** mission of making a difference. My passion and my obsession were to realize the truth about myself and about God!

There is no end to Education.
Just reading a few books, browsing a few websites, and getting a few degrees are not enough.
The whole of your Life –
from the moment you are born
to the last moment of your life –
is a process of Continuous Learning.

CHAPTER 06

LEARNINGS – ABOUT LIFE & BEYOND

I started reading extensively. First, I read whatever books I had in my library, and then I scanned through a few thousand books that I picked from every possible source. It covered every known religion. I sourced books from ashrams and also searched for all the known philosophers, masters, gurus and saints. This was not a joke! The exercise kept me engrossed for hours, days, and weeks, doing nothing else except reading, thinking, and analyzing "What is the ultimate truth?"

I first took my own religion and my "own" God to start the study. I reached a dead end. I prayed, I begged, and I cried to God for his grace! I was inspired to seek further, to go deeper. So I went into the specifics of each and every possible religion to get answers.

All religions talk about God. They accept the truth that there is a God. But unfortunately, they all talk of their own God. It confused me. Can there be so many Gods? I looked up into the sky and asked God, only to receive a smile in return. There is only one God. Different religions and different people refer to God by different names and different forms.

In India, water is called *pani;* in France, it is called aqua; and in UK, it is just called water, but it does not mean they are different. It is the same water.

Most of us may have heard the classic story of the six blind men, which goes like this:

Six blind men were asked to describe an elephant. One caught its ear and said that the elephant is like a fan. One touched a leg and said that the elephant is like a pillar. One felt the tusks and said that the elephant is like a pipe, and the one who touched the tail said that the elephant is like a rope. Another who touched the belly said that the elephant was a wall, while the sixth blind man who felt the trunk said that the elephant was like a thick branch of tree.

Actually, we are like the blind men thinking differently about one God!

God made me realize that the entire humanity describes God, but they are truly blind because no one has seen God. Trying to describe God to me was like trying to take a picture of the whole universe with my digital camera. Trying to explain God was like trying to see with the ears or smell with the eyes. I realized that God is a power beyond description. God is the Creator of the universe, and the human mind is incapable of comprehending God.

I even took up science and scientific theory as part of my study. I read about the Big Bang theory and about the Darwin's Theory of Evolution. I started filing the observations and conclusions of my research for further study.

My search, my *Talaash,* made me scan through hundreds of books, but not all the books triggered the

knowledge and wisdom I needed to find answers to the questions I had. A few books that provoked me to think further became the source of my overall understanding. Every book seemed to have some essence that needed to be picked up.

I even visited Tiruvannamalai to study about Ramana Maharshi in Arunachala. I visited Kanyakumari to know more about Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission. I went to Rishikesh in the Himalayas, to Varanasi, and to Rameshwaram to find the wisdom of the ancient sages. I also followed Adi Shankaracharya and the Shankar Mutts for the spiritual wisdom he left behind.

I then went into a retreat, into the mountains, in solitude – reading, introspecting in silence, carrying books of Swami Sivananda, Radha Saomi, and Swami Chinmayananda, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Quran, and many more. I put together all the most interesting and relevant information to help me complete the picture.

As I read, which I wil be sharing in the next few pages, I could not believe it to be true. Still, I decided to read with an open mind. I did not doubt anything, just as I did not accept it as truth. I was searching for answers.

Before the entire picture could be clear to me, I had to contemplate on these learnings.

WE ARE THE *ATMAN*, THE SOUL, THE SPIRIT

Not this, not this – we are not this body–mind–intellect complex. The ultimate goal is to realize the truth that we are something else. We are That, not This!

We are essentially the *Atman* – the pure self – which is neither born nor dies. But we claim to be the form we look like, forgetting the truth of what we actually are. How can we be this body that is constantly changing? Every minute we are being reborn as our cells die. Are we the tiny baby that was born or this adult?

IGNORANCE VEILS THE TRUTH FROM US

We are not aware of our real nature that we are the *Atman,* the Soul or the Spirit, because of ignorance.

The ego says "I am I", just like a wave in the ocean would say –"I am a wave". If one looks closely, the wave is nothing but the ocean itself. It emerges from the ocean and goes back into the ocean. Similarly, the Supreme Creator manifests in different objects. But we are unable to see this truth because of our ego.

We are ignorant, and we continue to live with ignorance because our body and mind are agitated with thoughts and desires. The mind thinks about 50 thoughts a minute! One needs knowledge to destroy this ignorance. And unless the mind is calmed and desires are weakened, we cannot acquire the knowledge needed to discover the truth.

The entire world that we perceive is just a mental 3-dimensional projection. The world is actually like a dream, but we are unable to see the truth. In a dream, everything looks so real. One does not even imagine that this could be an artificial projection of the mind. One cannot believe that one is asleep and the mind is playing tricks to project what is called the dream. In a dream, we can actually see, we can hear, we can feel, and we can experience what happens. But still it is just a dream. As long as we are dreaming, we believe in whatever we dream. There is no doubt about what is happening in the dream. And until we actually wake up, the dream is nothing less than reality. We think, the dream is not a dream, but it is the truth. Just like in a dream, we think everything is real till we wake up, similarly a true seeker will ultimately wake up to realize the truth that this world, which appears to be so real, is actually just an illusion.

When we are dreaming, only the dream looks real. We forget the truth of our waking state. When we wake up, we realize that the dream was only a dream, and what we are while we are awake is true. However, just as when the dream is over, when we wake up from the waking state, when the waking state comes to a final end, we will realize that it was just an illusion.

THE CREATION IS A MANIFESTATION OF GOD

Just like bubbles in water that arise and disappear, the world appears from God and disappears back into God.

Nothing is created. Everything is a manifestation of God. The entire world of things and beings is only a mental projection. God appears as the entire universe, and thus it is God that exists in everything.

Just as electricity comes from one source but gives light to the bulb and power to the air conditioner and other gadgets, we don't realize that the source of power that makes every animate thing function is one. Without that power, none of these things would work or exist. We forget that the entire creation is pervaded by a single power that makes the whole of creation exist the way it is.

The mind is unable to see all these as one; for instance, it sees 500 rooms on a land and identifies each room as a unit. It doesn't see the land as one. On breaking down all the 500 units and clearing the land, the mind realizes that it is one land. Earlier, it looked like there were 500 spaces – one in each room, but on pulling down the walls, there remains just one space. So it is with the ego. We think that we are individuals. We don't realize that we are powered by one source, one *Atman,* one Soul, one Energy.

If a gold bangle could talk and it was asked what it was, it would say, "I am a bangle". A ring or a chain would claim to be a ring or a chain; that would be its identity. But what are they made of? Gold! If all the three are eventually melted, the forms and the shape of the bangle, ring and chain would disappear. What would

be left is just gold. So also we are all the Soul that appears to be what we see in the mirror. Eventually, we are not the mirror image. We are the intrinsic energy that's within.

GROSS, SUBTLE AND CASUAL BODY

Our physical self is made up of three bodies: The gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body. The gross body is composed of five elements – space, air, fire, water, and earth.

We, as a gross body, go through several modifications – to be born, to grow, to mature, to decay, and to die. At death, this body disintegrates into the five elements. The fire or heat passes out and the body becomes icy cold. The air escapes, the water evaporates, and on disintegration, the space shrinks, and what is left is just a little earth.

The gross body gets life from the subtle body. Made up of 17 components, the subtle body consists of the five sense organs, the five organs of action, the five life forces, the mind, and the intellect. Together, the subtle body is like the driver of the gross body, and it makes the gross body move.

The five organs of perception are the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, and the nose. It is through these that we perceive the entire world.

There are five organs of action – speech, hands, legs, anus, and genitals. It is with these that we are able to speak, to grasp, to move, to excrete, and to procreate. The body responds to external stimuli through them. They are prompted by the mind into action.

The five life forces are Respiration, Circulation, Digestion, Excretion and Reverse Action.

To a common man, our body is just what we think it to be. We see it to be flesh and bones, more of the physical aspect. But on analysis, the body is clearly made up of the gross body and the subtle body. Nobody will deny the fact that the body is not the gross element of earth, water, air, fire and space, but it also includes the mind and the intellect. It includes the sense organs, the organs of action, the life forces – the *Pranas,* and therefore with even the slightest of introspection one will admit that the body is both – the gross body and the subtle body. What is difficult to accept is that there is a third aspect to the body called the casual body, the actual cause of the subtle and gross body; because this cannot be seen, it requires deep introspection to understand. The casual body arises out of ignorance and until one has knowledge one will never be able to realize that we are also comprised of not only the gross or the subtle body but also the casual body.

The five life forces that run the five systems of the body along with the mind, intellect and the five sense organs and five action organs together as the subtle body

drives the body into action.

The subtle body and the gross body are caused by the causal body, the subtlest of three.

The causal body cannot be explained or described. As long as truth is not known, this body exists. The ignorance itself is called causal body because it is the cause of the subtle body and gross body. It is not possible for one who has not acquired the knowledge and wisdom properly to understand and realize this.

It is strange that although the causal body does not physically exist, the ignorance in it creates the subtle body and the gross body, and thus gives it prime importance. The ignorance can be destroyed by knowledge. Therefore, the causal body is not eternal like the Soul or the true self.

Just like the wave that thinks it exists, but in reality, is actually the ocean; just like the 500 rooms that seem to have their own identity until the walls are brought down, and just like the bangle, the chain, and the ring that are proud of their identities till they are melted to gold, our ignorance continues to live as the ego till knowledge replaces ignorance.

Seekers find it difficult to describe ignorance. Imagine a little boy asking his grandfather about why he was not allowed to witness the marriage of his father and mother, how would the old man be able to explain this

to the young boy? It is the innocent ignorance of the kid that provoked such a question. Such ignorance is difficult to describe. The only way to overcome it is through knowledge because trying to search for ignorance is like trying to search for darkness with a torch. The more we try to understand or know ignorance, the more it moves away until we realize the truth.

FIVE LAYERS OF THE BODY

We appear to be what we are because our Soul is covered by five layers, sheaths or coverings. Instead of identifying ourselves as the Soul, which is deep within, we look at these outer layers and create our identity. It is our intellect through which we can discriminate and separate the pure true self, the Soul within, from these five layers. The Soul is just the source of power – the illuminator and the witness of the drama of life going on in this body and the world outside.

One needs to penetrate through the five covering layers to discover the true self that lies beneath.

The first outermost layer is the **Food Layer.** The Food Layer or the gross body is created from food. We are born as small little infants. What makes us the grownups or adults that we are? It is the food that we eat that becomes this physical body.

The second layer below the Food Layer is the **Vital Air**

Layer or Life Force Layer. The Vital Air Layer is subtler than the Food Layer. It is a layer that controls the five functions of respiration, excretion, circulation, digestion and reverse action. Along with the organs of action, these form the second layer.

The third layer is the **Mind Layer.** The layer of the mind along with five organs of perception – the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the skin – form the third layer below the Food and Vital Air layers.

The fourth layer is the **Intellectual Layer.** The Intellectual Layer controls the other three layers. It constitutes the intellect and five organs of perception – the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the skin – which are common to both the mind and intellectual layers.

The three layers, Vital Air or Life Force, the Mind, and the Intellectual layers together form the subtle body, while the Food Layer is the gross body.

The **Bliss Layer** is the fifth or the innermost layer of the body, just outside and immediately covering the Soul.

The five layers together conceal the true self, the Soul, or the *Atman.*

PENETRATING BEYOND THE FIVE LAYERS

People are born and they die thinking they are different from the Soul. Least do they realize that they are not the

body but rather the Soul.

Just as my house, my gadgets, and my jewelry are all mine, but they are not 'me', so also my body, my mind, and my intellect are all mine, but are not 'me'. I am different, but I am unable to realize this truth without focused discrimination.

Therefore, I am the Soul, the self. The three bodies and the five layers are not the true self, the Soul, that I actually am.

It may appear that the Soul is acting and moving, but this is an illusion, just like the moon appears to be running when the clouds move in the sky or just like the trees and the houses appear to be moving while travelling in a train, when in reality it is actually the train that is moving. When the mind is agitated, the Soul or true self seems to be agitated. But in reality, the Soul is silent and calm.

Due to ignorance and not using the intellect to discriminate, we confuse ourselves and super impose the qualities of the body, mind, and intellect on the Soul. In reality, we are not the body, mind, and intellect, but we are the Soul. But the moment we say – "I enjoy… I do…" it is the ego that expresses, forgetting its true identity. As long as the mind is functioning, we have desires and we experience pleasure and pain. In deep sleep, when the mind ceases to exist, all these disappear.

The mind is inert matter. It is the Soul that illuminates the mind and the body through its consciousness. Without the Soul, there would be no power to the mind, to the intellect, and to the body. The Soul does nothing else, except for illuminating or energizing the body.

IDENTIFYING THE TRUE SELF

So how does one identify one's true self? It happens by a process of negation – *Not this, Not this. Thou Art That.* Self-realization is attained when a seeker realizes that he is not the body – neither the gross, subtle or causal body. He is just the Soul, the power within.

There are some other principle statements in ancient scriptures that explain the truth. There are four Principle Statements.

1. We are the Soul, not the body that we appear to be – It may appear that we are the physical body. The body along with the mind and intellect. But in reality we are not this body. We are that, the Soul.

2. The Soul is God – The Soul, the Spirit, the *Atman* is not just another part of our body. On deeper introspection, we realize that the Soul is the Super Soul. The Soul is nothing else but God.

3. Since the Soul is God, God is everywhere, in everything – Not just the Soul in me is God, the Soul in you is God, the Soul in everybody is God. The Soul

in everything is God. Therefore, God is everywhere, in everything.

4. God is inside me. I am not the body. So, I am indeed God – Since I am not the body that I seem to be, and I realize that I am the Spirit, the Soul, and since the Soul is God then logically who am I? I am indeed God. God is indeed inside me.

What does this mean? It means that I am not the body, mind, and intellect. I am the Soul. And what is the Soul? It is nothing but God. The power that created the universe itself is the Soul that is within me. God is everywhere. Yes, the Soul that is inside me is also inside you and inside everybody. But these souls are not different energies, just like the electricity board supplies electricity to all the homes but it is one source of energy. Similarly, the Soul in me and the Soul in you comes from the same source. The Soul is the energy and nothing else and thus because this energy is in me, in you, and in everyone and everywhere, it means that God is everywhere. God is in me. It means that I am therefore nothing else but God. Since I am not the body, mind, intellect and I am the Spirit or the Soul, and further since the Soul is nothing but God, then it is simple to understand that I am nothing but a manifestation of God. The power inside me is actually God's power that makes me live.

The Divine Spark within me is the one illuminator. The things illumined are always different from the

illuminator. Thus, the body recognized by me is different from the pure self within me, the Soul.

I awaken, I dream, I sleep…. Therefore, the 'I' is different from the waker, sleeper, and dreamer. I am not the body. If I am not the body, then I can never be born, never decay, and never die. But if I, out of ignorance, consider myself to be the body, then I attach myself to that.

I am the Soul, the power, the consciousness that illumines all the inert world of matter in and around me. I am not the mind; therefore, I am fearless and I experience no sorrow. While I am not the mind, I still have a mind that is constantly thinking and desiring. Thus, I distance myself and remain unaffected by the eruptions in the mind. On realizing the truth that I am the Soul, I cease to identify myself with the mental emotions, and so I am no longer a victim of the emotions like sorrow and fear.

It is just like waking up from a dream where one mourns that his child died and on waking up, he stops mourning as it was just a dream. On realizing that I am not the mind, I distance myself from all the negative thoughts the mind creates, remaining in my pure state of bliss that arises out of the realization of the truth that I am consciousness. I am the Soul. I am Consciousness. The Soul energizes and illuminates everything in this world. It is the power of consciousness present everywhere in everything. Life, Energy or

Consciousness is the God Power that is in every atom of the world. It creates life. Without consciousness there would be no life. Everything would be dead. After negating all superimposed limitations, I realize I am not the body, I am not the mind – I am the pure self, the Soul. I am not the bangle, the chain, or the ring. I am the GOLD – formless, pure and eternal!

Soul or *Atman* is the ever-existing reality, but because of ignorance, it is not realized. Once ignorance is removed, just as the dark clouds move away, the sun whose light is already there shines; similarly the Soul is also realized.

It is unfortunate that the ego powered by ignorance binds the body and soul to being the body, mind, and intellect till the Soul is liberated on realizing the truth. The Soul that seems to be the body–mind complex seeks to realize the truth to become a liberated soul.

The realized soul on realizing the truth that it is not the body and mind, but only the Soul, renounces all the desires of the body-mind, which it is not. Although it still has a body and mind, it lives in the greater intoxication of Godhood and the subtler joy of God realization. This is a state of absolute bliss, knowledge, and truth. It is an experience of self-consciousness. To a liberated Soul, all struggles end. It seeks nothing, wants nothing, and remains in a state of everlasting bliss. It has realized that everything is God and there is no duality. If any object other than God appears, it is unreal

like a mirage. Everything is a manifestation of God. God is the one and the only one. Nothing else is real. Only God is the one true reality. The realized Soul comes to know that what is seen is also like a dream. It only is a three-dimensional dream. It is not real. It appears to be. The only reality is God. The whole of this universe, the being, the world, and even the God that we have created are all nothing but the same non-dual universal Power we call God. Due to our ignorance, we see the three - me, the world and God differently. We see ourselves different from nature and nature different from God. But the realized one comes to know the truth is that all the three are nothing but God, just different forms and manifestations. This comes as a realization.

One who renounces all activities and realizes that he is the Soul within him, that he is the power of God present everywhere, and that he is the true self, the one consciousness that illumines the entire creation – such a person becomes one with God just as the wave that realizes its ignorance stops being the wave, with the realization that it is the ocean itself.

THE WAY TO REALIZATION

To move into the path of self-realization and God-realization, one must take the first step as a seeker, and follow a path of enquiry.

A seeker must follow three courses to realize the truth.

1. **Listening to the truth –** A seeker must read scriptures, listen to the Master, to be able to absorb what is being said. What is being said will not be understood to be the truth at first. In fact, it would be quite questionable and difficult to accept and understand. However, a true seeker does not stop at that. He moves to the second step.

2. **Reasoning of the truth –** A true seeker goes one step further and tries to reason and see what he has listened to or read about can be true or not. Most of the time, reasoning the truth reveals some answers. But there is a problem. The mind that is an enemy of realization distracts the seeker from finding the truth just by listening and reasoning. How does one realize the truth? One has to move to the next step?

3. **Deep contemplation on what has been heard and reasoned –** After a seeker listens to or reads about the scriptures, he reasons to see what the fact is. The seeker goes deep within, meditates, contemplates, and introspects.

For a genuine seeker to realize the truth all the three steps are required – listening or reading, reasoning, and then contemplating. It is said that even after these three steps, there is a fourth magical step. You may be a seeker and follow all the three steps, but still you will not realize the truth. The fourth step is called the Grace of God. Unless there is the grace of God, the mind will continue to play tricks and disturb our thought process.

With these three steps and with the grace of God, a seeker can be liberated.

FOUR DOORS TO LIBERATION

On this search or *Talaash,* when I had stumbled upon the word "Enlightenment", I realized that there were four doors that one has to pass through to be liberated.

The term Enlightenment can be very complicated when it is translated to *Nirvana, Moksha,* or *Mukti;* but when equated to Liberation, it is quite simple. It just involves the understanding of a few simple truths.

First: The third peak of true happiness after **Achievement** and **Fulfillment** is **Enlightenment.** The first gives pleasure and the second peace, but the third gives ultimate everlasting bliss that comes from the realization of the truth that we are the Divine Soul, not the body–mind we seem to be. It is the joy that comes from the realization of the truth that I am that - the Soul, not this - the body.

Second: The understanding that this world is ultimately full of suffering. Anybody who is born must die. The cycle of life calls for each one to grow decay and die, and the only way out of this cycle of reincarnation is liberation of the Soul.

Third: We all live a life of ignorance thinking we are THIS (the body and mind) when in reality, we are not

this, we are THAT (the Divine Spirit).

Enlightenment is the realization of the self, knowing the truth of who we are by personally experiencing the reality within through self-realization. Once we understand the term Enlightenment, we start on the journey of liberation, which is a journey of freedom – freedom from ignorance, freedom from desires, and freedom from the ego.

The liberation of oneself needs one to actually realize the truth: Who am I? One must realize the truth of the illusion that this world is just a three-dimensional projection. One must realize that I am the Soul, not the body–mind complex. One must realize that the ego, the mind, and the body pull us into the world, which is the enemy of liberation. One must realize that the goal and purpose of life is not just to be happy, but rather to realize God. And this realization can happen when one passes through four Doors – *Dispassion, Discrimination, Discipline, and Deep Desire for God.*

1. Dispassion – Dispassion is Renunciation and detachment. It is a difficult path to follow for the one seeking pleasures and joy. Such a person is deeply involved in the world. The worldly person seeks all kinds of pleasures, which is perfectly normal. The one who starts a search for the true purpose of life, the one who asks questions about birth and death, and the one who goes on a quest for God – such a seeker realizes that as long as one believes that "I am this body–mind", one

will continue to crave for material pleasures. But once a person is on that path of seeking, then one realizes that it is impossible to be attached to the world and be liberated simultaneously. One needs to give up one for the other. It is like we have to give up one step to climb the next step. The seeker wanting Enlightenment knows that Renunciation is a door he must pass. He must detach. He must renounce to find Enlightenment. And thus a seeker of Liberation lets go. He consciously chooses to walk the path of renunciation, of dispassion, and of detachment. This helps the seeker start the journey to the third peak – the peak of **Enlightenment.** The key challenge for such a seeker is to live a life of divine acceptance rather than a life of desires, knowing the truth that "I am not the body–mind". The renunciate stops the mind from wandering, stops the senses from craving, and moves onward seeking Liberation and Enlightenment.

How is it possible for one to believe "I am not the body–mind" and at the same time seek as a body–mind? This is a dichotomy that cannot happen! So one should choose to be the *Atman,* the Divine Soul, as one pursues the Enlightenment journey and passes through the door of Renunciation, giving up desires of body and mind.

2. Discrimination – The next door a seeker must go through to reach Enlightenment is Discrimination. This is the door of the intellect. Unfortunately, we human beings have an intellect, but we don't always use it

wisely. We do use it for the achievement of pleasure, but we don't use it for the larger purpose – to understand life, self, and God. We continue to live a life of ignorance because we don't use the intellect effectively for realization of the truth.

One must use this precious jewel of the intellect to dispel the darkness of ignorance if we have to be liberated. The use of Discrimination is the ability to question and realize what is true and what is false. It is a constant battle for the body–mind as on one side the self thinks it is this, but the intellect knows it is not this. This body is a temporary covering for the soul, and it must die. But the true self is immortal. The soul never dies. Thus the intellect realizes the truth that – "I am not this. I am that". For Enlightenment, the intellect plays a vital role to answer many questions that eventually lead to Liberation.

The mind is the enemy of the intellect seeking liberation. The mind wanders and it distracts. And while the intellect concentrates and contemplates, the mind makes an effort to confuse the intellect. Thus, it is said that one must pass through the door of Discrimination if one must achieve Enlightenment.

3. Discipline or Living with the Six Virtues – The seeker lives a life of discipline with a 6-fold wealth, or the 6 virtues:

(a) Control of the Mind – To be liberated, one has to

control the mind. The mind wanders all the time. It constantly produces thoughts that pull one into the world. The goal is to not go into the world, but rather go away from it. To be liberated, one has to try and be thoughtless. But the mind makes it impossible. So, one needs to make "Control of Mind" their life priority and learn to tame the monkey of the mind, making it calm and focused.

(b) Control of Senses – We all have five senses: the senses to see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. These senses have sense perceptions. They trigger the mind to desire and wander, creating sensual desires. To be liberated, one needs to control the senses as the senses tie one down to the world and stop the process of Liberation. One must learn the art of controlling these five horses as they are referred to from driving one away from Enlightenment.

(c) Control of Cravings - We humans tend to develop cravings. These are habitual desires. "I want this and that". The senses keep on wanting and the mind converts these signals into action and we end up moving towards acquiring these habits instead of being liberated. Thus, it's so very important to not live with desire, passion, and expectations. These take us away from the journey towards Enlightenment.

(d) Forbearance, Acceptance and Endurance – One who wants to be enlightened and to go towards Liberation, lives with a positive attitude all the time.

Thus, if any bad situation arises, they still respond in a positive manner, not reacting negatively. They return good even for evil as it's a philosophy of their life. One who lives with Forbearance has learnt to accept the Divine Will and endure whatever comes as a gift from God. This virtue is key to being liberated. Otherwise, one would sink in the world.

(e) Faith and Surrender – He who seeks liberation has to live with FAITH – Full Assurance In The Heart. He has to live with HOPE – Have Only Positive Expectations. He has to live with TRUST – Total Reliance, Unconditional Surrender to the Almighty. There can be no doubt in the mind of a seeker. He must believe and live with total faith and in total surrender to be Enlightened.

(f) Focus, Silence, Meditation – The sixth virtue is focus or equipoise. Focus is on the truth. Who am I? Focus on the teachings of the Guru and Master. It needs silent introspection. It needs concentration and contemplation. It needs one to go within to the truth, instead of going out and getting lost in the world. This focus takes one to know the truth and achieve liberation.

Together, these Six Virtues help one progress towards Liberation.

4. Deep Love and Longing for God – This is the fourth and final door one must pass enroute to Enlightenment

and Liberation. A true seeker seeks nothing else. He knows that everything is an illusion. Only God is the one reality. So the seeker moves on as a lover of God, a seeker of God, which means that one seeks nothing except God.

A seeker takes up Renunciation, uses his Intellect to wipe out ignorance, and chooses what is right. He moves to the third door by choosing to live with the Six Virtues. And while doing all these, he develops a passion, an obsession for God. He seeks nothing else but God.

Once a seeker of truth walks through these four doors, he is ready to be liberated and then moves up the peak of Enlightenment.

I discovered these four Doors and resolved that I would live a life of Dispassion, of Discrimination, of Discipline and with Desire for God, seeking nothing but God. I shall renounce everything I needed to because now nothing else mattered. I was not the body–mind. I would discriminate between the real and the unreal. I no longer wanted to live a life of illusion. I would incorporate Discipline, the six virtues, in my daily life. God was already my life priority, but I would divert all my love to God, making it my only desire.

My search for knowledge was an amazing experience. I must admit that as I found the pieces of the puzzle that fell together, some parts still seemed to disappear and I did not know why.

I then embarked on an interesting reading on the "Watcher",

the fourth state of Consciousness.

This state studies the three states of our consciousness – the waking state, the dreaming state, and the sleeping state and helps us realize that we are not the three that we know, but the fourth that we do not know: the state of being the Watcher, the detached observer.

Our common intelligence permits us to realize the three states that we are aware of. The Waking state (that we all know), the Dream state (that we experience), and even the Deep Sleep state that we are aware of. But we do not realize the fourth state – the state of consciousness that is watching all the three states. It is this fourth state of consciousness that we truly are, but we are unable to realize this fourth state.

This only endorsed my realization that I was not the body, mind, intellect, but rather the Divine Spirit or the Soul.

The Soul is Real and Eternal, and it remains unchanged in all periods of time – past, present or future, of existence. It was always there and will ever be. It is birthless and deathless, beginning less and endless. The Soul is consciousness and self-illumining. It doesn't need anything to illumine itself, like a sun doesn't need a torchlight. The Soul is bliss or absolute happiness. It doesn't seek happiness. It is happiness!

The one who realizes the truth that one is a Soul revels in that realization. The realization itself creates so much joy and so much bliss that there is no need to look for

further joy and bliss. The happiness can be compared to the light of the sun where one does not go to search for an artificial torch or a light because one is already experiencing the brightness of the sun. Such is the bliss that comes from the realization of the truth that I am not the body but the Divine Soul.

Together the Soul is real or eternal, consciousness, bliss. It is eternal bliss born from immortal existence and absolute consciousness.

The realization of the truth comprises of three aspects of the Soul - the aspect of the Soul being real, immortal, and true; the Soul being eternal consciousness; and the Soul being eternal bliss. Overall, it is this triple realization of the Soul that makes the realized one be in a state of bliss being the Divine Power.

THE UNIVERSAL TRIO

The Universe consists of three important identities: the individual or being, the world, and the Creator.

These appear to be three different identities, but in reality, there is oneness between them. The part is never separate from the whole. The individual subtle body and gross body are made from the total subtle elements and gross elements, just like the wave is part of the ocean.

The individual who identifies himself with the gross body considers God to be different from himself. In

ignorance, the Soul or self is called the individual. Because we identify with the body, with the mind, with the intellect and with the Soul, we think that we are a combination, a complex of the body, mind, intellect and Soul. The Soul that is actually the Divine Power is confused to be a part of the body, mind and intellect. When in reality, the Soul is not part of the gross or physical body. It is because of our ignorance we think that the Soul is us. We do not realize that the Soul is God.

The infinite truth or God, the Creator, is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-pervading, and controls the illusion of the world. The same infinite truth becomes the individual, in ignorance. The sun reflects in a bucket of water and assumes a small identify as the reflection in the water. If the reflection forgets its true nature, it feels bound by the bucket of water. If it realizes that it is light alone, then it plays around in the water, unaffected. Truth reflected in the bucket of the gross body and the waters of the subtle body is called the individual. An individual forgets his true nature of being the Soul, and thinks he is the body. Thereafter, he thinks that he is different from every other object and being in the world. He thinks God is far away from him. All these thoughts are born out of ignorance.

Man, out of ignorance, forgets the truth. In his desire to be happy, he runs after illusions of the world that causes the cycle of birth and death. Only upon the realization of the truth, a man can escape and be

liberated.

The goal of human life is to realize one's own true nature and thus comes the importance and need of a Guru who can explain the truth. Otherwise, people are shocked to hear the blasphemous statement that God and 'I' are one.

In reality, 'I' am not the gross body, but the Soul, which is God. The gross body is just an illusion. When I know I am not this, I am that and that Soul is nothing but God, then I realize the truth of "I am That". I am the Divine Power!

A realized being who has realized the truth of "Not this, I am that" becomes a Liberated being – Liberated while living. To him, the awareness that I am not the body, but I am the pure infinite self becomes firmly rooted and effortlessly known. He lives as the infinite self, knowing the world is unreal. He lives without the fear of death or worry of loss. He lives knowing that the self in me is the self in all, and so he loves all as himself, knowing that the entire world is pervaded by God. The Liberated being becomes free from the bondage of all karmas. He knows he is neither the doer of action nor the enjoyer of action and is thus free from actions. He has nothing more to attain, nothing more to do. He lives in complete detachment, in supreme bliss and in fulfillment, with love for all. He experiences a freedom in action. He knows the actions performed by him are not his and he is free from all karmas.

WHAT IS KARMA?

Karma literally means Action. The word Karma is beyond just action. It is a law. So, when anybody talks of Karma, they are mostly talking about the law of Karma or the law of action. The law of action in simple words states, "As you sow, so shall your reap." Every action will be returned with an equal reaction. It is a law of cause and effect. What does it actually mean? It means that we human beings on Earth are governed by a law of action or a law of karma. All our actions do not go unnoticed. Every action of ours is recorded in our so-called life book – good actions and bad actions, good thoughts and bad thoughts. Each of our actions gets recorded because we will be redeemed, and we will be returned with an equal amount of good and bad. So, if I do good today to somebody that act is not wasted. The goodness that comes from me gets recorded to be returned back to me. If I do bad deeds, my bad deeds are also recorded and returned.

Nature controls this law of Karma. It is governed by the Power we call God. Understanding the law of Karma is so simple. If you plants mangoes, you will get mangoes, not tomatoes. And so it is with pineapples. If you want pineapples, don't plant strawberries because if you do so, you will only get strawberries. Such is the law of nature. We see it all around us. And it also implies to our life. The law of Karma has one aspect that is not easily understood. The actions that we perform are returned to us not necessarily in this lifetime. But it can

return to us either in this lifetime or the next. Those who do not believe in life after death do not accept this belief or theory. They do agree that good or bad will be returned but believe that it will be all finished off in this life itself.

However, the question comes, why is a small child born deformed or physically challenged? Why is the Creator of this world so cruel? Then the logic goes back to think that this child is being born either with loads of happiness or unhappiness, pleasure or pain, good fortune or bad fortune, not by chance but by choice. This individual who is born carries with it its karma, its past actions. If the past actions that comes from the previous life or lifetimes is good, then this individual will be happy and will be born in a rich and influential family with loving friends and people around. But if the karma of the person born is negative then he will suffer. He will suffer because of his own actions, his own karma.

This is believed to be the law of karma or the law of action. It explains that if we keep on doing bad deeds and escape from it for whatever reason best known to the Creator, then where are all our bad deeds going? Will God forgive or let us escape from our bad deeds? Of course not! They are recorded. Today or tomorrow, we have to repay our deeds, good or bad.

Good actions will receive good rewards just as bad actions will receive bad results. However, the ego

thinks that one is responsible for the actions. This is the cause for us to sink in this world. It is the sense of "doership" that binds us to our actions. Actions give results. The doer then becomes the sufferer or enjoyer of the fruits of action. This chain of "doership" and "enjoyership" is bondage. On realization, one knows, "I am not the doer nor the enjoyer" and gets liberated from karma and from the cycle of death and rebirth because it is selfless action, not one's actions.

Nobody can escape from this law of karma, the law of action. Many spiritual saints advice that the law of karma or action is not punitive. It is not meant to punish us. It is reformative. It is meant to reform us to become better human beings so that ultimately we realize the truth and we are liberated souls. But while many people do understand the law of karma and some even believe in it, not everybody accepts it in totality. What is this law of karma? What type of karmas exists? And how does it work?

There are three types of Karmas.

1. Karmas created in this life through actions in this life
2. Warehouse of past karmas of several previous births
3.Karmas brought at the start of this life from the past cumulative Karmas to be consumed in this life

The first type of Karma refers to the Karmas performed in our current life journey. The actions in our current life create this Karma. Whatever we do - every thought,

every action - creates Karma. Good thoughts and good actions are creating a positive score so as to stay in our Karma account just as bad thoughts and actions are creating negative scores in our Karma account. Therefore, every action of our current life does not go unnoticed. It is recorded in the books of Karma to be added back to our life score - whether it is positive or negative, good or bad.

The second type of Karma refers to the Karmas that are accumulated from all our previous births. This is a cumulative warehouse of all our past Karmas. Just as we are creating positive and negative Karmas in this life, the warehouse of past Karma is a cumulative of all positive and negative actions of all the previous lives that we might have had. Therefore, the score of positive and negative Karmas of every past life doesn't get wiped off or deleted. Even after our life, the positive and negative Karmas that are not redeemed in the lifetime get carried forward into the warehouse of our Karmas and thus become the cumulative past Karmas.

The third type of Karma refers to those Karmas that we have brought from the warehouse to this present birth. When we start our life, we bring a portion from the cumulative Karma to negate in this life. Every time we take birth, from our cumulative warehouse of Karmas, we pick up certain Karmas positive and negative and bring them to the current birth to consume or redeem. So, there is always an opening balance to a person who is born. And this opening balance is this third type of Karma.

Therefore, we are all born with a karmic score, either positive, negative or a combination of both. In fact, it is that karmic score that gives us the opportunity to choose where will we be born, to which family, and in what circumstances. It is not by chance; everything is by choice. The questions that comes, "How is all this possible?" It looks like a myth, an illusion, because when I die how can I still continue to choose my next birth and who is the one that carries the karma because the body is buried or cremated. For this, one has to go back to the realization that I am not just the gross body but I am also the subtle body - a combination of the mind, intellect, ego, and memory. The inner instrument - the subtle body, the mind, the memory, the intellect and the ego does not die. It is the mind that controls the action and the body only follows the mind. Therefore, the one who owns the karma, good or bad, is the inner instrument that is the combination of 'I' the ego and mind, which includes the intellect and the memory. So, it is this instrument that lives beyond death. The subtle body of mine after death, gets an opportunity to choose what my next life would be based on my positive or negative karma. And it is the same subtle body which is - 'I' the ego, the mind, the intellect and the memory – the inner instrument that will come back and be born as another being to redeem or receive the positive karmas or consume the negative karmas. Those who understand the law of karma also believe in rebirth because they are connected. And it is so logical that people accept today that there is something called karma or the law of action or law of cause and effect.

At death, the gross body disintegrates. The subtle body, propelled by the causal body, is said to take up a new body and carries with it the karmas. A realized Master who realizes that "I am not the body and the mind, but I am the soul" is relieved from all the karmas as these karmas do not belong to the soul. The karmas are dropped once one drops identification with the body and mind. So one who acquires knowledge of his true self becomes free from these karmas. The current karma is also destroyed just as the warehouse of karmas gets dissolved. Even the karmas that have been brought to this life do not affect the liberated being as he knows he is neither the gross body that dies nor the subtle body - the ego, mind, memory, intellect. On realization that he is the Soul, all the karmas disappear.

YOGA – UNION WITH GOD

What is Yoga?

Actually, Yoga means "*YOG*" – Union with God.

For a seeker of Enlightenment, Yoga is the very basic foundation. Unlike popularly understood, Yoga is not just physical gymnastics. The word Yoga means UNION. It implies that one is constantly connected to God all the time. Absolutely! How is this possible? Its best understood by imagining one to be like a sim card always searching for the satellite, pinging for connectivity at all times. Without the satellite connection, the sim card is useless. Similarly, we are

useless without the connectivity with God, our spiritual satellite. But most of us don't seem to understand this. For most of the world, being connected to the world, to friends, and to family is what matters. They don't get into the introspective and inquisitive mode of asking – Who am I? Why am I here? They think that the purpose or goal of life is happiness. They seek pleasures. They live and die only to be born again and again in this world of suffering. It is the seeker – one who is ever connected to God – who achieves the ultimate bliss that comes from the realization of the truth.

Life is meant to be lived with God, being constantly connected with God. Sadly, most of us are disconnected!

The world has distracted us. So, we do not connect with God. In fact, we have forgotten God. However, one is often compelled to think of God at times of distress, misfortune, or death.

Yoga or Union with God is possible in four ways:

1. Yoga of Action (Working for God) – One who creates a union with God through his work does everything as an offering to God. There is no selfish objective in his work. He lives as God would like him to. He surrenders like a flute to God so that God can play His music through him. He considers himself to be God's instrument. God works through him. Therefore, his actions are not his actions, but actions that are inspired by God and that build a connection with God.

2. Yoga of Devotion (Loving God) – One who creates a union with God through his devotion is one whose life is full of love and longing for God. His devotion and dedication are seen through his prayer. A devotee sings spiritual hymns and dedicates himself to God, never forgetting God. Meera achieved a very high status of being a *Yogi* through her devotion. She was madly in love with her God. It meant the most to her, more than anything else!

3. Yoga of Education (Acquiring knowledge of God) – The third connection is gaining union with God through acquiring knowledge and wisdom. A seeker who reads, searches, learns, and contemplates all the time is a Seeker of wisdom. Because of such seekers, there is so much knowledge of God available in the world today. This seeker is always connected to God through the intellectual channel. Though the seeker knows much, he understands that he is nothing and God is everything.

4. Yoga of Meditation (Silence and introspection) – The last union is considered to be the king of all and is all about meditation and silence. It includes the popular 8 limb yoga which includes the yoga of breathing and postures. However, meditation means focus of body and mind. If the mind is wandering while the body is in a yogic position, it has no meaning. This is another method that connects to God.

It is sad that the world today has understood yoga to be

a lifestyle solution for a good body and mind. Sure, yoga is good for the body and mind, but the bigger question is – are we the body–mind? To the one who is on a quest, he knows I am not the body and mind. He realizes the deeper meaning of yoga and uses it as the foundation to attain Liberation and Enlightenment.

A true seeker who wants the ultimate answers knows that there is a power: a power that created this whole universe; a power that's responsible for its preservation, a power that manages the sun, the moon, the stars, the birds, animals, flowers, and us humans. This is the work of a creative power, a power beyond human imagination and beyond human comprehension - a power we call God. For one who seeks Liberation and Enlightenment, it becomes imperative to be in yoga, to connect with this Power.

THREE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We all go through three states of consciousness – Waking, Dream, and Deep Sleep.

In the **Waking state,** we identify with all the three bodies and experience the world through them. This waking world seems very real.

The next state is the **Dream state,** where the world is projected while in sleep. The mind creates, sustains, and ends the dream. During the dream, the true self does not identify with the gross body, but only with the

subtle and causal bodies. The dream may seem unreal to the waker, but is very real to the dreamer.

The third state is called **Deep Sleep state.** In this state, the waker and dreamer, and the body-mind are asleep. It is only the causal body that experiences deep sleep. It is a state of bliss that makes us say –"I was happy, I slept well".

The Waking and Dream state differs for each one of us, but the Deep Sleep state is the same. Whether one is a king or a beggar, ignorant or wise, all experience bliss in Deep Sleep.

The three states of consciousness come and go. I, the true self, or the Soul witness these three states. I am neither the Waker nor the Dreamer or the Sleeper.

Apart from the three states, there is the **4th state of consciousness.** The fourth quarter is a state of awareness. In the first three states of consciousness, we are unaware of who we are and what we are. We are absorbed by illusion of the world.

The challenge is to discover the fourth state. Everybody cannot discover the fourth state because we are consumed by the world. We live as the body, which includes the gross, subtle, and causal bodies. We live as the ego, and thus we feel, "I slept. I am awake. My body. My mind, nothing else." This is caused by the ego, the causal body. Once we know that there is a fourth state,

this awareness helps us in realizing God.

When we withdraw entirely from the gross and subtle bodies, we identify with the causal body or the ego, and then in deep sleep, we temporarily experience bliss. Such awareness is the fourth state of consciousness. It is the state of realization and the key that opens the door to Liberation. This state is achieved through silence and meditation, and one becomes aware of the truth. In self-awareness, one understands that the true self watches the Waker, the Dreamer, and the Sleeper and knows the truth. When we identify with the Soul, we are liberated. This liberated self is in the fourth state or total self-awareness. It is a state of pure consciousness. One who is realized lives in the fourth state – the state of awareness of the self - and one functions with the super conscious and lives as the Soul in complete awareness.

Self-awareness is living in total surrender, total bliss. With the absolute knowledge, one lives in bliss, knowing the truth that God is everywhere. Through self-awareness, one understands that the illusion of the world is a myth. One in self-awareness lives as the Soul, not as the body, mind, intellect, and ego.

I could now relate to the three states of consciousness that I had experienced and how I was actually the fourth state – the Watcher, not the Waker, the Dreamer, or the Sleeper.

A GLIMPSE OF THE TRUTH

We think what we see is the absolute truth, but it is not so. It is a relative reality, not absolute reality. We have neither created ourselves, nor have we created the world. Surely, there must be a Creator!

Why is it important to know the truth? We all seek happiness. By knowing the truth, we attain supreme happiness. Human beings cannot be the cause of the world; we were born into it. Man cannot be the cause of himself because ultimately who created man? The world cannot be a cause of itself, and the world cannot be the cause of man as it is inert. Therefore, there must be another factor, a third factor, that must be the cause of man and the world. This factor is a Creator we call God.

Some ask the question: If God created all, then who created God? This question is fallacious. God is the final, ultimate cause or the causeless cause. A knitted picture of wool shows mountains, river, sunset, and animals. If we start pulling a thread of wool, we realize that the wool alone has become all. Similarly, the man, the world, and God are one.

What is **time?** Do we humans stop to ask this question?

Time is known to us as the past, the present, and the future. Both past and future are with reference to the present. The past when it happened was the present,

and the future when it happens will also be the present. So the essence of time is the present. The concepts of the past and the future are superimpositions on the present, timeless truth. There is no experience of time without events. So time is defined as the interval between events.

What is **space?** Such a simple question but who thinks of it?

Space is something that accommodates. Directions are always with reference to this body. They are not absolute. In Singapore, Dubai is in the west, and in London, Dubai is in the east. Space is measured with reference to objects as distance. Space is a thought in the mind. In deep sleep, there is no space.

Both space and time have existence only when we identify with the body. When I know I am not the body, I am timeless and space less. I do not exist in time and space. These concepts of space and time exist in me as superimpositions.

When the first thought was not yet born, I - the watcher - was there to acknowledge its absence. When it happened, I witnessed its appearance and disappearance. I also witnessed the appearance of the second thought. Hence, the concept of time as an interval between thoughts exists in me.

Here, there, nowhere, and everywhere are all space

concepts. Being beyond space, I am here, there, nowhere, yet everywhere.

Now, then, never, and ever are time concepts. Being beyond time, I am now, I was then, I never was, yet I ever am.

Being aware that I am not the body and mind but just pure consciousness, I am here, I am three, I am nowhere still everywhere. Being the consciousness, I am now, I was then, I was never but still I am ever.

The enlightened man knows himself to be the pure self - the Soul, the *Atman* - shining within the heart in the body. How can I, the witness, be bound by such actions? I do not just live in the body, but pervade the body and the entire world. I am the self of all, immeasurable and infinite. I am not in the body, but the body is in me. This seems a little complicated, but it is actually very simple! I am not in the body, but the body is in me. It is just like saying, "Is there gold in the bangle, or the bangle is in gold?"

Obviously, we human beings say that there is gold in the bangle, but if we remove the gold from the bangle, what remains? Nothing! Therefore, there is no gold in the bangle, but there is a bangle in the gold. In this case, if the bangle in the gold is removed, the gold still remains. It may not be easy to understand, but this is the truth. Similarly, I am not in the body, but the body is in me. We realize this truth only when we realize we are

the Divine Spirit that pervades everywhere. We are not this body–mind complex that we think we are. Just like whether there is gold in the bangle or there is the bangle in the gold, we often think there is consciousness in us. It seems to be common sense to think that consciousness is inside us. But if we have consciousness inside us and if we remove consciousness, what remains? Nothing! We are dead. But on the other hand, if we think that we are in consciousness and if we even remove ourselves, the consciousness still remains. Consciousness is eternal. It is there always. And this should help us understand the truth about who we are in reality.

A child gets so excited while watching a movie. He cries and laughs as the scenes change in the movie. The grown up man may laugh, but he knows that the names and forms are unreal. The scene alone was, is, and will remain when the movie is over. The lights and sounds are all projections. The actor never forgets he is acting the tragic role of a widower and is actually not one. Similarly, for the wise man, the world is a stage where the drama of life goes on. He also assumes a role and enjoys the act.

Many claim to have seen God – God in his true nature is nameless, formless, infinite, and all-pervading. If one wishes to see electricity, one would have to stop looking at the objects illumined by the filament and contact the filament itself. If somebody were to say, I have seen electricity just because they have seen the bulb, it does

not mean that they have actually seen electricity. It is their misunderstanding that the bulb is electricity And they are seeing only the electricity that lights up the bulb. But they do not realize that there is difference between the bulb and the electricity. Therefore, while we may see statues, forms, and scriptures, we think we have seen God, but in reality, God is a Power, an Energy that is all-pervasive – Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient. But just by seeing the statue, we haven't seen God. We can see God when we realize the truth that God is everywhere!

The ego uses thoughts in the mind to express itself. "I was sad. Now I am glad" How does one catch the ego? It is extremely elusive and escapes all attempts at his capture. The only way is direct confrontation. We ask, "Who am I?" Being an illusion, it runs away or melts into thin air like a ghost. The survival instinct of the ego is very strong. It does not mind academic study regarding itself, but does not allow actual enquiry. If true enquiry begins, we get rid of the ego for all time to come. The most difficult thing to conquer in this world is our own mind. Having conquered the mind, the world is as well conquered. As long as the ego exists, it will prompt us to become something or the other.

The precious jewel, the true self, the Soul, seems to have got lost in the deep well of the world. How do I retrieve it? It is lost in the deep waters of thought. One who attempts to retrieve it must be well qualified with a sharp intellect. Breath control helps the mind to attain a

state of absorption. The precious jewel, the Soul, can be realized through union with God. And this union is possible either through work, through worship, through silence, or through realization by acquiring knowledge.

Silence in the mind also helps, just as discrimination, that distinguishes what we are from what we are not. I am not the body, senses, or mind. I am the witnessing consciousness.

Does the wise man sit idle all day? Of course not! He performs in surrender. There is freedom in action, not freedom from action. He understands that being born in this world, we are gifted with a mind that will think and senses that will perceive. We cannot do away with these thoughts and perceptions. How do we control them? Therefore, we cannot sit in quiet thoughtlessness and inaction all the time. Every human being has to act, and it is a challenge for us to be in action but not be absorbed in the world. That is the real challenge!

We may be intellectually convinced that we are not the ego, yet we cannot abide in the truth. One must enquire again and again, sometimes for several births to attain true realization.

DUALITY AND NON-DUALITY

The dualist says that the individual and the supreme can never be one. The non-dualist says that there is no

duality. While most learned spiritual and religious beings agree and realize that we are not the body or the mind, but we are the Spirit or the Soul, there are two distinct groups that think differently – one who cannot accept the fact that God and human beings can be one. How could it be possible? They always believe that we are separate from God. But the non-dualist goes deeper and tries to contemplate on the fact that this whole universe was created from nothing by nothing. The Creator, like a spider that weaves out its own web, created the universe on its own. Everything is a manifestation of God, created by God, from God.

This story well explains this. Ten fools went on a pilgrimage. On crossing a river, the leader was worried that the tenth man had drowned, not realizing that he was the tenth man. He counted and found only nine. A passerby counted them and told him, "You are the tenth man". Why the leader was worried that the tenth man was missing? And why was he counting all the nine but not himself? This goes on to tell us that we take stock of all that we see, but the subtle energy that we are – the Spirit, the Soul, or the *Atman* – we ignore that. And just like this leader who was counting the nine people ignoring himself, we count everything else except the *Atman,* the Soul. And that is our challenge on the path of seeking the truth.

THE FOURTH FACTOR

Three factors are necessary for gaining the results of

any action.

1. The doer
2. The instrument of action
3. The act itself

None of these three factors can independently produce the result. The plough cannot plough without the farmer. The hand cannot write without a pen. A tree cannot grow without a seed being planted. The farmer, despite ploughing and sowing seeds, has to depend on rains. If we were capable of getting desired results, we would always get what we wanted. But such is not the case…. Thus, there is a fourth factor that is responsible for the results – this factor is called the **God Factor.** Man is only an operator who utilizes God-given powers to act. He doesn't control all the results.

Man forgets God and gives rise to his ego and acts as if he is the doer. The action gives results, and he is the enjoyer. Man gets caught in this vicious circle and thus gets attached to the joy of the results. He realizes that the results are impermanent, but he cannot give up action. The only way for him to come out of this situation is to perform action without desire for the result. Man gets attached to the result because his ego makes him feel that he is independent and self-sufficient. He forgets the fourth factor.

The realized one is no more anxious for Liberation. He is already liberated. He is a Liberated being. Liberation

has nothing to do with the body. After enquiry and death of the ego, the soul is liberated. However, some feel that true Liberation is only possible when the body falls at death, where Liberation from body–mind is achieved.

CHAPTER 07

STORIES THAT LEAD TO THE TRUTH!

There are many stories that I had read and pondered over, which helped me progress towards my realization.

Is THIS True or THAT True?

One a day, a courtier came to King Janak and informed him that there was an attack on the kingdom. King Janak prepared himself and declared for a war. It was one of the toughest wars, and unfortunately, he lost it and was wounded. The enemy king captured the kingdom and ordered King Janak to leave the kingdom immediately. King Janak started his journey out of the kingdom in a situation where he was wounded and was left hungry and thirsty. He asked for water and food from the people, but they refused in fear of their new king. King Janak, left with no options, tirelessly walked for days and night with no food and water. However, at the entry of the new kingdom, he saw food was being served to the poor people. Immediately, he walked towards the line of people to get something to eat. But the moment he reached the counter, the food was over. The server saw him and said, "I can give you starch. I am sorry, but this is the only thing that I can offer." King Janak, being helpless, agreed for the starch. The cook gave him the starch, but the moment King Janak took the bowl of starch to help himself, an eagle jumped on it, and he dropped the bowl on the ground. King Janak lost the last hope and fell down seeing the starch getting mixed with the dirt. In utter despair, he screamed, "Oh Lord!!!"

That moment, his bodyguard entered the king's bedroom and saw King Janak on his bed, sweating heavily and with pain in his chest. The bodyguard checked if he was alright. King Janak took a deep breath and said, "Is THIS True or THAT True?" He asked, "What is the Truth?" Am I a king who dreamt that I was a beggar, or am I a beggar dreaming that I am a king? Is This true or That True?

King Janak remained in that condition for a while, leaving the people in his kingdom worried about their king's state of mind until one day, a learned saint Asthavakra Muni came to his capital. He heard about the King's situation and decided to visit the court. Seeing the king confused, he asked what the matter was. The king again murmured, "Is THIS True or THAT True?"

Then, saint Asthavakra said, "Dear King Janak!! Neither 'this' nor 'that' is truth. YOU ARE THE TRUTH!!!"

For the first time, King Janak got an answer to the question. In the past, people had told him, "Of course, you are the king. Why you ever doubted? You know you are the king. That was a dream." That's what people said. To which, King Janak always said, "No, but what is true? Am I a king dreaming that I was a beggar, or am I a beggar dreaming that I am the king?" King Janak could not believe their answer that he was indeed a king. Until this saint Asthavakra came and told king

Janak, "Neither this is true – that you are a king dreaming you a beggar; nor that is true – that you are a beggar dreaming to be a king. And this made King Janak realize the truth.

Learning: My learning from this story is that the waking state is just like a dream. Because ultimately when everything is over, when life is over, everything dissolves just like everything in a dream dissolves. The saint tried to explain that neither the waking state nor the dreaming state is real. But there is the other state, the state of the true self, the Soul, which is the real state. This is what saint Asthavakra tried to tell King Janak, and King Janak being a man of seeking was awakened by this.

The Immortal Fruit

Once a great sage gave the king a fruit that would help him attain immortality when he consumes it. The sage told the king that the fruit was rare and one of its kind. The king was very happy, but while he thought about gaining immortality, his thoughts revolved around his dearest queen, without whom an immortal life seemed meaningless. So, he gave the fruit to the queen and asked her to have it so that she can be immortal and be with him forever until his last day.

The queen gave the fruit to the charioteer with whom she was secretly in love with as she wanted him to be with her forever. The charioteer, in turn, gave the fruit

to the damsel with whom he had a relationship. The damsel thought that she was too ordinary a person to have such a fruit, and so she gave it to the king.

The king while receiving the fruit from the damsel doubted if the sage told the truth that the immortal fruit was rare since the damsel also had the same fruit that he gave to the queen. On asking, the damsel told that the charioteer gave her the fruit, and on further introspection, the charioteer revealed that the fruit was given to him by the queen.

On hearing this, the king heartbroken, and realizing the illusion of this world, left all attachments and lived a renounced life.

Learning: The world is full of suffering. We should not have expectations because if we do, we are bound to become miserable eventually. Love of the earth is not eternal and is often faced with disloyalty and deceit. Such is the world! Why should we be disappointed and heartbroken?

Love of God is eternal. Instead of loving humans who may break our heart, it is far better to love God who will never do so. This story clearly showed how earthly love can be so fickle and lack true devotion. It is sad but true. Hearts in the world will be broken again and again. Love God instead.

Ved Vyas and Jaimini

During Ved Vyas's time, there was a king named Jaimini. He wanted to renounce the world so Vyas told him, "Don't stop your devotion and love for God. Renounce your desires here itself."

But Jaimini insisted on going to the forest and left. One day, in a storm, a group of girls lost their way. One girl got separated from the group and reached Jaimini's hermitage in the forest. She was fully wet and looked sensual. Jaimini told her to go away, but she said that it was raining and animals would attack her in the forest. She requested Jaimini to give her a place to stay for the night.

After much persuasion, Jaimini gave her a room, provided that she would agree to go in immediately, lock the room and not open it at night for anybody, including him.

As it would be, the sensual image of the girl disturbed Jaimini, and he went to her room later at night and knocked at the door. She refused to open it. Even when he said, "It's me – Jaimini." She refused.

Finally, Jaimini climbed to the window at the top of the door, pulled it open and jumped inside.

What did he see? Ved Vyas was sitting inside. It was a test to show Jaimini that going to the forest does not

mean that a person has renounced everything. Renunciation is about having a will power and power of discrimination to control cravings.

Learning: Unless we control our mind and the senses, we cannot live a life of renunciation and liberation. And this need not happen in the middle of the forest. Man is a social being. He has to act. Man cannot abstain from action. We can have freedom in action, not freedom from action. The mind would always think, and the senses would always perceive. We cannot stop the mind from thinking and the senses from perceiving. But we have to get the mind and senses under the control of the intellect and the intellect under the control of the Soul. That is the challenge! What I learned is that by running away from this world, we cannot get liberation. We have to face this world. We have to realize the truth of who we are. And we have to live, renouncing the cravings of the senses. We have to live despite the wandering of the mind. In this world, as a seeker, as a renunciate, we have to renounce by knowledge of the truth that we are not this body and mind. By suppressing our feeling, we will not reach anywhere. And there cannot be a better story to teach me this truth.

Karna and Arjuna

Once Krishna and Arjuna were walking towards a village. Arjuna was pestering Krishna, asking him why Karna should be considered a role model and not

himself. Krishna, wanting to teach him a lesson, snapped his fingers. The mountains beside the path that they were walking on turned into gold. Krishna said "Arjuna, distribute these two mountains of gold among the villagers. You must donate every last bit of gold".

Arjuna went into the village and proclaimed he was going to donate gold to every villager and asked them to gather near the mountain. The villagers sang his praises, and Arjuna walked towards the mountain with a puffed up chest. For two days and two continuous nights, Arjuna shoveled gold from the mountain and donated to each villager. The mountains did not diminish in the slightest.

Most villagers came back and stood in queue within minutes. After a while, Arjuna, started feeling exhausted, but not ready to let go of his ego just yet, he told Krishna that he couldn't go on any longer without rest. Krishna called Karna. "You must donate every last bit of this mountain, Karna", he told him. Karna called two villagers. "You see those two mountains?", Karna asked, "Those two mountains of gold are yours. Distribute these fairly to all the villagers", he said and walked away.

Arjuna sat dumbfounded. Why hadn't this thought occurred to him? Krishna smiled mischievously and told him "Arjuna, subconsciously, you yourself were attracted to the gold. You regretfully gave it away to each villager, giving them what you thought was a

generous amount. Thus, the size of your donation to each villager depended only on your imagination. Karna holds no such reservations. Look at him walking away after giving away a fortune, he doesn't expect people to sing his praises, he doesn't even care if people talk good or bad about him behind his back. That is the sign of a man who is already on the path of enlightenment".

Learning: My learning from the story of "Karna and Arjuna" is very simple, yet profound. Both of them were great warriors. But here, Krishna was trying to talk about the goodness of the spiritual values. And he taught Arjuna a lesson about detachment. He told Arjuna that although he was given two mountains of gold to give away, his ego and his mind were in command. Thus, he could not distribute the gold, and he failed. But it was very simple for Karna just because Karna was detached. He was a man of realization. He knew that nothing belonged to him. We come empty handed, and we go empty handed. He was given a task by his Master just to distribute the gold so he did not feel that he owned the gold. He just called the villages and said to distribute the gold among themselves. He did not feel that it belonged to him. He did not have a feeling of ego that it was he who was giving away the gold. He just walked away, achieving the task in moments with such ease just because he was detached and in command of his senses and his mind.

If only we are in command of our body and mind, we

can move ahead like Karna. Otherwise we will be caught in this world, and it would be impossible to move towards Liberation.

Krishna and Narad

In a mythological tale, Narad and Krishna were coming from heaven. Krishna said, "I am thirsty. Please get me water". So Narad went to the nearby village and knocked at the door of a hut. A very beautiful girl opened it, and he instantly fell in love with her. He forgot everything and started romancing the girl.

Days and weeks passed by, and then he got married to the same girl. He had children and around twenty years passed.

Suddenly, one day, there was a devastating flood and Narad tried desperately to save his wife and kids, but he could not and when he gave up, he heard Krishna's voice, "Narad where is the water? I am still waiting". Narad did not even know that time had passed so.

Learning: What does this story of Narad teach us? Isn't it true for most of us that once we are born in this world, we grow up, we complete our education, we start working, we get married, we have kids, we build a business, we get our kids married, we grow old, and we die? Do we ever stop to realize that just like Krishna had sent Narad to bring water, we all were send to this world with a purpose: to realize the truth of who we are.

We forget that purpose, and we are so busy with the world until at the end, when we are just about to die, we call out to God saying, "Oh God, I am about to die. I am suffering. Save me and take me to heaven!" That's when Narad calls out to Krishna, when he is completely helpless. Why did Narad forget Krishna? Why do we forget God all through our life? This is called Maya or the illusion of the world. This unfortunately traps us, and we forget the purpose of life. And this learning reminds us why we are here and what the purpose of life is.

Anal Haq Mansur

An Arabic mystic, Mansur was famous for saying "Anal Haq. I am God".

One day in his ecstasy, he started saying, "Anal Haq, Anal Haq". He did not realize it. Later, when his devotes told him what he was saying, he refused to accept it. He said, "I did not say that! How can I say such a thing?"

The next time he said it, his devotees called several neighbors who Mansur respected. They too witnessed it and told him that he said, "Anal Haq".

Mansur was upset. He instructed them that if he ever said "Anal Haq" again, he should be killed by a sword.

A few days later, again he said, "Anal Haq". So, the

devotees took a sword and tried to chop his head off. But to everyone's surprise, the sword kept passing through his neck, and he was not affected! It was as if he was invisible. They tried several times, but all in vain.

On his return from his ecstasy, when they narrated everything to Mansur, he explained, "It was not me who was saying 'Anal Haq', but God himself."

Learning: The learning from Mansur's ecstatic experience is symbolic, yet very meaningful. The truth is that we are not this body. This body is just an appearance. We are God inside. But we do not realize this truth. Being enlightened, Mansur realized the fact that he was God, not man. We are all God. We are all a manifestation of God but we appear as man with this body and mind. And in the story, when his devotees were trying to kill him, they couldn't as at that time he was saying "Anal Haq". He was actually the manifestation of God. Symbolically, we all are invincible. We all are immortal. But because we think that we are mortal, we die and we are reborn.

Religious Significance

Once, there lived a spiritual teacher who along with his disciples would practice meditation every evening. The teacher had a cat and when the teacher and disciples would meditate, the cat would run around, distracting everyone. Seeing the situation every time, the teacher ordered his disciples to tie the cat every evening. This

went on, and soon it became a daily practice to tie that cat so that the meditation sessions were not disturbed.

Years later, when the teacher died, still the disciples continued to tie the cat before the start of meditation. When the cat eventually died, they got one more cat to be tied up. This became a ritual that was rigorously followed.

Learning: What is the learning from this story? The western world calls it "stone cat". Stone cat is a symbolization of how we all create a stone cat and start praying to this stone cat with irrelevant historical significance, which makes no sense. But that's what most religions are about. Most of the beliefs and rituals followed in many religions are not true or relevant. Most of the religious rituals are like the Chinese whisper, which changes from generation to generation and person to person, and we believe in things that make no sense. Should we just blindly believe what people tell us? If somebody tells us to pray to a stone cat, should we start praying to a stone cat without understanding the significance of why should we pray to it? What is this story all about? Today we pray to a God, but do we stop and ask, "Who is this God? Where is this God? What is this God?" Of course, we must pray to God. That is beyond doubt. But should we not try to find out the true meaning of God? God is a Power. But where, who, and what is this Power? Should we not truly connect with God? Should we not build a communication with God? Or should we blindly

respect an idol, a form, a name, or a scripture without understanding the truth and without realizing what lies behind it? The story of the cat urged me to seek the truth of life. And that's what I did. I kept seeking until I found the true answers of life!

Living with the false notion

A person named Amthabhai started thinking that he was a rat. He was caught up with this belief so much that he began to behave in a peculiar manner like a rat would. He was finally taken to consult a psychiatrist. During the sessions Amthabhai was told that he was Amthabhai and not a rat, until he got convinced intellectually. He then asserted firmly, "I know that I am Amthabhai." The doctor was glad that Amthabhai recovered. However, within a few minutes, Amthabhai came and in aghast and said, "I know that I am Amthabhai; but does the big black cat seen on the other side of the road know that?"

Learning: We human beings suffer from the same false notion that we are this body. Though some of us get intellectually convinced that we are not this body, we fail to recognize ourselves as the Infinite Truth until we get realization!

Our body and mind opposes the realization of the truth, that we are a Divine Soul. At the first opportunity the mind will distract us and make every effort to push us back to our belief of being 'I' the ego, the body, the mind.

Withdraw from sense pleasures

Once a monk was given a glass of lassi (a cool drink made of curd) after it was being served as a 'Prasadam' or blessed food in a temple. The monk took a sip of it and then stopped. He handed over the glass of lassi to the person who served him. The person asked the reason for doing so. He inquired, "Didn't you like the lassi Swamiji?" To this, the monk replied, "Because I liked it, I won't take it!"

Learning: The realized ones often deprive themselves from wordly cravings lest they become a reason for their losing the mind and sense control. They train themselves to live as a tortoise that draws in its limbs, their senses at will. They stay away from sense pleasures, and live with discipline having control over their senses.

Emptying the mind

Once Adi Shankaracharya was walking through the market place along with his disciples. They saw a man dragging his cow with a rope.

Shankara asked his disciples, "Tell me who is bound to whom? Is the cow bound to this man or the man is bound to the cow?"

The disciples promptly replied that the cow is bound to the man. Since the man is holding the rope he is the master. The cow has to follow him wherever he goes as

it was tied by the rope. Hence without any doubt, the man is the master and the cow is the slave.

After listening to them, Adi Shankara took a pair of scissors from his bag and cut the rope that tied the cow. Immediately, the cow ran away from the master and the man ran after his cow. Adi Shankara then said, "Now do you see who is the true master? The man or the cow?"

All along, it looked like the man was the master, but now it seems the opposite.

Learning: This is exactly the case with our mind. It looks like the worldly things are tied to us, but in reality it is we who are tied to the worldly things.

When we understand the irrelevance of these things and we cut the rope of bondage, they disappear like the cow and we can be liberated.

Appearance is an illusion

A TV crew was making a documentary of the River Ganges, from a place up in the Himalayas. After they finished taking the video, they did the editing and they were showing it to the Sage who was their host in the mountain. The senior Saint made a comment, "Give me a glass of water from the Ganges river that is flowing on the television. The reporters were aghast and said, "How can we give you a glass of water from the Ganges that is flowing in the documentary. It is only a video

image of the river and it is not the river itself!"

The priest remarked, "So is the world. It appears to be but it is not." It may look like it is but eventually it is just an image, not reality.

Learning: It is so amazingly true, so fantastically created, that it is beyond human comprehension to detect its falsehood. The three-dimensional movie that is playing in this world is so fast that the human sense of perception does not capture the reality. It is very rare for any individual to be able to capture the truth that this entire world and all that is happening in it moment by moment is nothing more than a film, a three-dimensional image that is being projected to our eyes and our mind.

Sometimes a simple
Analogy can trigger
a Transformation.

CHAPTER 08

ANALOGIES

By now, it had been nearly 2 years since I started my search, and about 1 year since I had made my Quest, my Talaash my life priority.

I prayed. I begged God to shower His grace on me and I was inspired to go away, to the mountains for 2 weeks, alone with all my books and my notes. In the mountains, in freezing temperatures, I spent hours together without desire or pleasure, determined to find what I was looking for.

I came across few analogies that helped me reflect and understand the learning so far.

The Wave and the Ocean

The wave is not a wave. It is a part of the ocean. But because it thinks, 'I am the wave', it exists as the wave. Eventually, it is a fact that the wave merges with the waters of the ocean.

Similarly, we are not 'Me' and 'I'. We seem to be individuals in the ocean of this world. But like the wave merges with the ocean, we too came from and eventually merge with the ocean of life.

This body, made of five elements, is not permanent. It is created by the ego that thinks it is a human body. Just like a wave we think we have a separate existence. Finally, at death, the five elements disappear into Nature and the Soul or the *Atman* merges with the Supreme Soul or the *Paramatman* like the wave merges with the ocean.

Just as the wave becomes the ocean, the Soul becomes a part of the Creator.

Therefore, the realization comes that believing in a separate God different from the God within does not seem to be as true as the belief that God inside is nothing but a part of the Creator. Just like the wave that thinks that thinks of itself to be separate from the ocean, comes from the ocean and goes into the ocean, we too are created from God and eventually go back to God. Although it looks like a wave, the fact is that it is the ocean itself. Although we look like individual bodies with a Soul, we are ultimately one energy.

We must realize this truth and accept it!

Air in a Pot when it Breaks

Some people question, "How can you say that God is within me and God is within you or God is everywhere?"

The best way to understand this is as follows:

Imagine a pot that is empty. The pot thinks that the pot is different from the universe. It thinks that surely there is a universe but "I am a pot". It thinks that the air inside the pot belongs to it. There is air outside and air inside. When the pot breaks, the air outside mixes with the air inside.

Just as this pot thinks of itself as different from the

world, we too think that the life inside us and God are different. This is the cause for duality to come into place. One thinks that the Soul is different from God. Because of the ego, we think we are the Soul and God is something else, an unknown power. At the end of the journey, when the physical body drops dead, it only then that one realizes - the physical body is dead, but where does the Soul go?

The Soul is a part of the Creator just like the air inside the pot becomes one with the air outside the pot. The air inside the pot merges with consciousness of the entire atmosphere, the universal consciousness, the universal air.

Clay Elephant or Clay Mouse

An elephant made of clay thinks "I am an Elephant". A Mouse made of clay also thinks "I am a Mouse".

But when both are put in water, they dissolve to become clay!
It is only our perception that we see them as a clay elephant and a clay mouse.

Whatever be our outer appearance, the inner reality is the Soul. The Soul merges with the Creator. We are That, not This. We must not consider ourselves to be what we seem to be. Rather we must realize the truth of what we truly are.

When we realize the truth of the self then we can see the

Soul in all, we can see the Creator in all and this is the key to Liberation.

The Moon and the Finger

Zen Buddhist teachings talk of *Nirvana,* of Liberation, and of escape from the cycle of death and rebirth. They talk about how one should seek Enlightenment. Of the various methods the Zen Buddhists teach, one simple method is talking of the moon of Enlightenment. They refer to Enlightenment being the blissful, peaceful moon, and the Zen Buddhist teachings are just like the finger that is pointing to the moon urging us to seek the moon, to go towards the moon, to try to contemplate on, introspect on, and desire the blissful state of the Enlightenment, which is like the moon. And what do we do?

Instead of looking at the moon, our gaze gets stuck at the finger that is pointing to the moon. The teachings are just like the finger not the moon itself. The teachings show us ways to the goal. There is no one single right method to realize the truth, but there are several teachings. Each teaching must be understood and implemented in the right manner so as to reach the enlightened moon. Unfortunately, we often take the teachings literally and do not understand their true relevance. We get stuck to the finger that point to the moon, and we forget the moon itself. We go literally by what is taught instead of understanding the principle, the logic, and the purpose.We get stuck by the teaching

itself. We wrongly misunderstand what is really meant and go round and round in circles. Instead of reaching Enlightenment, we are stuck on Earth, going from death to rebirth again and again. We must seek the moon of Enlightenment and not get stuck at the finger that denotes rites, rituals, or superstitions that we often get stuck to.

Go Beyond Religion!

A sage once explained that some books and religions have a lot of knowledge that can help us realize the truth. But unless we get the wisdom from the words written, it is of no use.
"Take a book and squeeze it. Not a drop of water comes out of the book; until the water comes out, it is all book".

So also until your religion makes you realize God, it is useless. One who only studies books is like the donkey that carries a heavy load of sugar on its back but does not know the sweetness of it! The religions of today focus on three things: symbols, names, Godmen. All seem to be fighting with each other. This is not the true purpose of religion. True religions are meant to help followers develop a deep seeking, longing, and yearning for God that ultimately helps them realize God!

Realizing that it is only a Dream!

Suppose you woke up one morning from a dream. In

the dream, your neighbor borrowed Rs.10,000 from you saying that his father is not keeping well. Later, in the dream, you get to know from other people that the neighbor plays tricks with everybody for money. He has fooled other people similarly and borrowed money by saying the story about his father's illness, though his father is in good health.

Suddenly, you wake up! Will you go and ask your neighbor to return the amount that you gave him in the dream. Of course not! It was just a dream. On waking, you immediately realize it. Unfortunately, so is life. But we do not realize it till death. Very few are fortunate to realize the truth.

Who are You – the Station Master or the Train?

Once there was a station master who was a seeker. He went to a saint and asked him the question, "How do I know that I am the Atman? How do I understand that I am not one of the three states of consciousness: the Waker, the Dreamer, or the Sleeper, but I am the fourth state of consciousness, which is the Watcher?"

The saint smiled at him and asked, "Who are you? Are you the station master or are the train?"

The station master exclaimed in surprise, "What a silly question! Of course, I am the station master!" The saint asked him to explain what he does at the train station.

The station master replied, "Every day, three trains pass by the station. The first train is the Daily Express, which comes to the railway station and goes. The second train is the Intercity Express. Finally, the third train that passes by is the Night Express. He continued, "While these are the trains that come and go, I do not confuse myself with these trains. I know that I am the station master. I watch these three trains as they pass by".

The saint patiently listened to him and asked, "While you are very clear that you are the station master, what about your life? Just like the three trains, your first state of consciousness comes when you wake up. Your second state of consciousness comes in dreams, and as you sleep, your body is asleep but your mind hallucinates into a dream. You dream all kinds of dreams till you wake up. Then, the dream is over. The third state of consciousness is deep sleep. In this state, both the body and mind are fast asleep. You are blissfully unaware of everything. This state also comes and goes; you fall asleep till you wake up. Eventually, your sleep ends, and then you are back to the first state of being awake. Unfortunately, you don't think that you are "watching" these three states of consciousness that come and go. You start believing that you are the one who is awake, the one who is dreaming, or the one who is sleeping. You forget to realize that you are the watcher because you identify yourself as being the dreamer, the sleeper, or the waker. When you forget

that you are the watcher, it is just like forgetting that you are the station master and that you are not the trains that pass by the station. Therefore, you are the watcher who is in the fourth state of consciousness, which is beyond the first three states".

The learning from this analogy is that we must realize and distance ourselves from the three states that keep coming and going. We are not the three states that come and go. We are something else. We are the fourth state of consciousness – the state that watches the other three states! In short, we are the consciousness that exists in all the four states.

We are not this, we are that

What is this? This is my hand.

And what is this? This is my leg.

What about this? This is my nose. And above it is my head.

Who is this that is saying it is my hand, my leg, my nose, my head? There is somebody who is saying. Who is that? Who is that who is saying that it is mine? Imagine tomorrow we start detaching each part of our body. We detach our hands, our legs, our sense organs, is it not still our body. So, what finally makes the body? It is that Energy, the Spirit, the Atman within that we do not realize. The moment the Atman leaves the body, we

cannot say it is my body because we are dead. It clearly shows that we are the Consciousness, the Spirit, the Atman, the Soul which when it leaves the body, we die. We are That…which we do not realize.

What do you see?

You pass by a beautiful statue of a tiger in a wild life sanctuary carved out of stone. What do you see? You see that it is a tiger that is carved out of stone. You don't think it is a tiger. You see it as the statue of a tiger that is carved out of stone. Imagine you see it from a distant, far away. What do you see? You don't see the stone, you just see the tiger. And you imagine it to be a tiger. It is so real, so full of life that you thought it was a tiger. At that time you did not realize that it was a stone. When you came very close to it, your fear disappeared because you could walk over to the tiger and touch it. It was just a tiger that was carved out of a stone. From a distance, you thought it was a tiger, a real one but you realized later on when you came close by, it was not a tiger, it was just carved out of a real stone.

With you were a few children who were paranoid. They were not willing to go close to the tiger till you made them understand that it was not a tiger, it was just a stone carving and then when they realized that it was not a real tiger and only a stone carved one, they went and started taking pictures with the stone tiger.

So, is the case with the world! What do we see? We see

the world. We see everything in it but we do not see our true self. We do not see our Consciousness. We do not see our Soul. We do not see what is behind the world. It is only when we realize, when we look beyond that we see beyond the world, to realize the truth of who we are.

Without focused contemplation, we think we are the body, mind, intellect, ego because we perceive it like that. When we get into the depth, into contemplation, in meditation, into realization then we realize that we are not the body, not the mind. Then we get the 'aha' I am not the body, I am not the mind, so what am I? I am the Consciousness. I am the Soul. I am the Spirit. I am the Atman.

The reality does not change, our paradigm changes. The reality didn't change that it was a stone carved tiger. From a distance we thought it was a real tiger but when we came close, we realized it was not. So, it is with life, when our paradigm changes and we realize the truth we come to know we are not the body, mind, intellect, ego. We are the Divine Soul.

God is within

People go to worship God in temples, churches, mosques. They go there and finally close their eyes to communicate with God. Why? We close our eyes because God is within us. Intitutively, we know it, consciously we know it. But we don't accept this truth. If God was actually in the temple or the church or the

mosque, then we would be staring at that God, not closing our eyes and looking within. It is common in most religious places to see people close their eyes to experience the power of God within. This goes on to prove that our very nature knows that God is within. We can worship God in different forms and go to different places of worship but when it comes to communicating with God, we always turn within. God is within!

By now, I had enough knowledge on the body, the mind, the intellect, the Soul. I knew I must be in Yoga – in union with God. I must live with renunciation, discrimination, with the 6 virtues and with deep longing and love for God. I packed my bags, took all the books and notes – it was August 2014 and I went off to the mountains. I was alone, and I was contemplating on one thought – "Who am I?", "What am I?" "Am I the Ravi V. Melwani who was successful or RVM who was transformed, or am I something else?"

On a train in Switzerland, I was reading about – "Not this, not this…I am that" and just as the pure white snow seemed to zoom past the train, I could clearly see that I am not this body. This body will die. This body was something else last year and will be something else the next year, as my cells are regenerated. How can I be this body that keeps changing?

Sure, this body will die. But I will not die. I am the energy that the body will release at death. But surely, I am not this body. I am not even the mind. Then 'Who am I?'

As I changed and boarded another train, I also changed the

book I was going through and my eyes were struck on a line – Thou Art That. The 5000-year old Scripture proclaimed in its first Principle Statement- Thou Art That. I had studied this many times and had actually read about it 20 years ago. But now I could actually understand it. I am not this body, this mind, this intellect or this ego. I am that, the Divine Spirit, the Soul, the Atman. It is strange that I read this 2 decades ago but only now I realized its true meaning.

I recalled the death of a dear friend and how when I saw that his body was going to be cremated, it dawned upon me – "this is not him, he has left the body. He has gone!" Now I felt, - I am that Soul, which gives power to my body to live, to breathe, to move.

Today, I felt beyond doubt that I am not this body, I am that; the Soul. It was like the body mind playing a tug of war and pulling me into the world. But today I felt that the body - mind lost the game of tug of war and I like a balloon was flying in the sky, feeling I am that, not this.

In fact, I felt that for a long time I had been imprisoned within the body-mind, and that I had just been freed from the prison bars. Of course, I was not this body. I could see so clearly that this body would die and the subtle body would take birth in another form due to its karmas. I felt that the subtle body was also part of the body, a part of this entire worldly illusion.

The truth is that people take birth again and again, but there is something beyond that. On the realization that we are the Soul, the energy and not the body – mind, we don't need to take birth again and again and suffer in this world. We can be

liberated from the cycle. The fog was beginning to clear and a clearer picture was emerging.

If I was not the body, then why was I living with desires and expectations of the body? The desires and expectations were often left unfulfilled and made me miserable. I quickly searched for another book because I remembered reading about how we make ourselves miserable thinking we are the body. I realized that if I had not realized the truth today, I would go through the cycle of death and birth again and again, because I thought I was RVM. It dawned upon me that I must further renounce through discrimination, live in Yoga, with a deep love and longing for God. All these years, I thought I was a wave in the mighty ocean of the world. Today I could feel I was the ocean itself and the Soul that was within was a microcosm of the Creator or God. I felt the need to control my mind, my senses, my cravings and desires, which were the cause of misery. I could see so clearly that nothing belongs to me and that nothing is mine. Why should I worry about my wealth or think about how much money I have in the bank? How did it matter? I felt a very strange energy passing through my inner being and I felt joyful as the train moved on.

I felt liberated and I felt challenged to be 'that' and no more 'this' that I always thought I was. But why did I always think I am this? It was my ego and my mind that were using the power of illusion to project an illusion and hide the truth. I suddenly realized how simple it was to answer the questions that I had been thinking about for 2 years! What is the purpose of life? The purpose of life was to realize the truth that I am not this body, mind and intellect. I am the Soul. But one

part of the answer was still hazy, the part on God: Who is God? Where is God?

But at least I knew one half of the answer – that the goal of life was Liberation, self-realization, Moksha or Nirvana. Suddenly I felt a "wow" feeling. I am not this mortal body, I am that immortal soul – the Atman. And I felt so grateful to God for this realization.

The next day, I started with excitement because I felt that my jigsaw puzzle would be solved.

Who is God?

Where is God?

What is God?

CHAPTER
09

GURU AND GOD

While I read so much, met so many people, studied analogies, went through stories regarding realization, and acquired all the wisdom – the knowledge and information – required for liberation, I realized that liberation is not possible without the grace of God and the help of a Guru. Nobody can ever reach liberation unless it is the will of God, which may either happen through direct communication between a seeker and God or most often through the help of a Guru, a representative of God – a human form of God on Earth. With the help of a Guru and the grace of God, one can rapidly tread the path and climb the peak of Enlightenment, realizing the self and God. Without the Guru and God, this is as good as impossible.

WE MUST SEEK GOD! NOTHING ELSE!

We must realize the truth. How long would we run behind pleasures? How long would we let sensuality distract us? Can't we realize that this is a temporary gratification that will end in death and decay and not give any lasting satisfaction?

At death, when the body starts to decay, even the closest ones distance themselves. The beloved wife shrinks with horror at the sight of the dead body. We must wake up and realize the truth. What is the point of just acquiring wealth? We ignore the permanent, though we have the power to reason. We create our own sorrows. We let lust and passion create pain. We shouldn't live by instinct like animals. We need to be liberated and be a realized being. Youth is not permanent. Wealth comes and goes. What is permanent? Only God! Desires will distract us and

pleasures will tempt us, but the end will be full of sorrow. Choose an eternal goal. Renounce! You will be happier. The real bliss is within. Seek God. Listen to the voice of God. Experience the God that dwells in your own heart.

How does one seek God? How does one pray?

PRAYER

Such a common term "Prayer", but does the world actually know what it means and how it connects to God.

Prayer is of three types.

1. Rituals done by the body, like use of fire in a plate to pray in temples. The entire body is involved, including our hands, our mind, our eyes, and our mouth.
2. Chanting the name of God: only the mind and mouth are used.
3. Just contemplation, only silence. Introspection/ Meditation is superior to rituals and superior to chanting.

All the three methods may be used, but one must evolve in prayer.

Contemplating and meditating on God will lead to the realization of the truth, but this needs supreme devotion.

The method of Silence and Introspection can lead one to liberation. One method known as 8-fold path of yoga advocates – the practice of Values; Discipline; Postures; Control of breath; Withdrawal of senses; Concentration of the mind; Meditation and Total cessation of all thoughts. The third and fourth – Postures and Control of breath are commonly practiced, but true union through Silence and Introspection needs the practice of all the eight steps. By restraint of breathing, the mind becomes absorbed. As it witnesses the breath, it gains peace through concentration.

Man attains supreme happiness upon self-realization. With the help of a Guru, a qualified seeker can gain realization by dispelling his ignorance.

Is knowledge realization? Of course not! I had read many of these concepts before, but it never struck me that I was not the body. I always believed that I was Ravi V. Melwani and I was the creator of my business and the author of my success. When I transformed my life to RVM, my ego still reigned supreme. Never did it occur to me that I wasn't what I saw in the mirror in front of me. For the first time ever, after reading and reading and reading for weeks and months, I started feeling sparks kindle within me that made me believe that I was close to discovering a new Truth!

One afternoon up in the mountains, as if from nowhere, I got a flash. I was looking at the mountains, the clouds, and the sky that was overcast as it was snowing. There

were thousands of trees. There was a river flowing. It seemed as if a voice was speaking to me and saying, "This world is an illusion. The whole world is a three-dimensional myth. It's the *leela* or drama of God. All of these are His manifestation". Can you imagine creating all these – all that I could see with my eyes? It's difficult to believe that all this is just an illusion, a dream, a 3D dream. But the entire scene and the voice within made me believe. All this may seem real now, but in the end, nothing is real. It's like a dream. In a dream, the dreamer thinks everything is real, but on waking, he realizes that it was just a dream. So is it with life. It's just an illusion, and we don't realize this until death or realization.

It is strange, but I must admit that I found my mind to be my biggest enemy. When I would focus on a thought, it would wander away, spoiling my concentration. It seemed like the mind triggered my senses to crave for a delicious meal or even exciting sex. The boiling point of realization was never reached, because each time I tried, the mind switched off my effort to seek the truth. Have you noticed that when we heat water, it does not boil even at 99.9 degrees? Similarly, we do not realize till we reach that point of realization – just like the temperature of 100 degrees at which the water starts boiling. I decided that I would not let this happen. I started renouncing many things – first food and then sensuality so that I could progress on this journey. I sharpened my intellect to decipher between what was true and untrue. I let my love for God grow beyond

anything else as I lived, controlling the mind, controlling the senses, and annihilating every craving. I put my faith together to focus on this journey with endurance and forbearance. With all these in focus, I couldn't believe the change that I was beginning to experience!

MY GURU

Who helped me realize the truth? Even if I scream a million times, it will not be enough! It was my GURU, my dearest Dada, J. P. Vaswani.

I met him over 25 years ago, and at that time, I knew nothing about realization. He led me forward on the spiritual path. He was instrumental in my transformation from a businessman who was making money to a philosopher who gave up his business to make a difference.

In August 2012, after 20 years of being my Guru, I heard him say: "What is the purpose of life? Is life meant to be wasted away? We must go in a *Talaash*… a search". The thought of looking for a purpose came from my Guru. The thought was just about to die when in August 2013 he once again reminded me by asking, "Have your progressed in your search?" It is then that I gave up everything and made the search an obsession. There is nothing in my life that has not been influenced by my Guru. He has held me like a child and helped me walk forward, holding my hand. He is a realized soul and has the grace of spiritual magic with the blessing of another

realized soul, his Guru – Sadhu T. L. Vaswani.

Dada taught me many things. It was only recently that I heard him emphasize on the importance of silence and meditation – how one should switch off completely so that the mind doesn't wander. The mind is a thief, he would say. It robs our contemplation. Through all the nine doors of our body, we are only able to look outward. We need to open the tenth door to look inward to realize the truth, and this needs meditation and silence. How could I realize the truth without my Guru?

In fact, without a Guru, realization is impossible. How can one understand everything in the short span of just one life? It needs the spiritual exposure of several hundred or thousand years to be a realized soul. Only a realized Master or Guru can help one cross the shores of the world. Vivekananda had Ramakrishna. Adi Shankara had Govindapada. God appears as a Guru to help a seeker realize the truth. I was blessed with Dada. Patiently, persistently, and lovingly, he has guided me forward for 25 years onward, forward, upward, and Godward.

While everything above helped me realize the truth, my Guru taught me one thing that I can never forget. Without the grace of God, you can never realize the truth. You need to be loved and to be blessed by the Master, the Creator. Therefore, our love for God is paramount. If we do not have deep love and longing for

God, our Beloved, where would the grace of God be? Sometimes our love for God can be expressed by our love and reverence for a statue like the way I love Lord Shiva. It could be prayer, like I did *abhishek* and *aarti* for over 20 years every morning and night; or it could also be dedicated devotion to a Guru if we are blessed to have one. Love of God could also be expressed through service of suffering humanity. If we are able to see God in the poor and serve them, then there can be no better form of loving God. My Guru always said "Service of the poor is prayer to God!" I am grateful to God and my Guru that I got an opportunity to do many of the above. It was my Guru's teaching to be humble as a blade of grass and to thank God at every step. I believe that all these led me realize the truth!

Love God beyond anything and everything!

My search made me realize one very important principle. The purpose of life is God. We are a part of God. We have lost contact with God and we must return to God.

Therefore, my priority was God, my desire was God, my passion was God, and my obsession was God. There was a deep desire, a deep longing for God.

I wanted nothing else, except God. My entire love, every atom of love so as to say, was for God and for nothing else and no one else. I wanted God beyond everything else. Nothing else mattered except God!

I felt I was madly in love with God, my Master, my Creator. Though I could not see God, I could feel and realize God in every breath I took, in every sound I heard, in every sight I saw, and every emotion I experienced. It was God, and nothing but God!

$$E = mc^2$$

CHAPTER 10

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

In this Talaash, this Quest, this Search, one hurdle was the scientific paradigm of the truth. My spiritual views were quite clear about God and life. Science seemed to have a very different view. So, I thought that I will take a peek into the latest scientific beliefs to see how distant science and spirituality are. I was quite surprised to find that science and spirituality that had divergent views are finally converging. They were both propounding the same thing in different ways. Never before were science and spirituality so close to each other, and practically, it seemed that both hardly have any contradiction in their views. The spiritual view and the scientific view were the same truth presented in a different manner. If one analyses, the learning, analogies, and questions that faced me did not only have a spiritual but also a scientific endorsement.

With the latest developments, scientists now believe that up to 98% of our body changes every year. It looks like an unbelievable statement but scientists and biologists have proved that the cells in our body are constantly dying, regenerating, and being reborn. They go on to say that the cells of every part of our body and every organ of our body are constantly changing. This is something quite strange and unique, but it is scientifically true. It means that what I am in 2016, I was not that in 2015. Ninety-eight percent of me was something else. And what I will be in 2017 will not be this body.

It is even more profound because what our body becomes depends on the things that we eat. Therefore, if we eat vegetables that are being grown, that vegetable becomes our body after it is processed within and becomes a part of our new cell structure. And those cells that die in us go out to be regenerated and become a part of the universe.

But science says it is true. Science goes on to say so many more things. It goes on to say that inanimate things are alive. It goes on to say that if you take an atom of a so-called inanimate or dead thing, and look at it under a microscope, you will find it moving. But we always thought that we are alive because we are not yet dead. Science has now proved the contrary. The inanimate or dead things are as much alive as we are. All these make us wonder about the truth of life – Who are we? Where do we come from?

In the last century, scientists have uncovered the vast energy present in all matter. The well-known equation $E = mc^2$ states that the potential energy of any matter is equal to its mass multiplied by the speed of light squared: Energy = Mass × 186,000 miles per second)^2. This equation implies that a small amount of matter contains a large amount of energy. In $E = mc^2$, *E* stands for energy, *m* stands for mass or matter, and *c* is the speed of light. This equation explains that it is possible to take mass or matter and convert it entirely into energy. If we take any matter or mass and annihilate it,

light, sound, power, and energy come from it. Even a tiny atom has enormous amount of energy associated with it. It is said that if the mass of an average sized tree could be converted into energy, the power yield would be 45 trillion kwh. By way of comparison, the US generates about 4 trillion kwh of electrical energy per year. So, if just a single tree's mass is converted into energy and that energy harnessed, it would provide the entire US with over 10 years of electrical energy.

Another very interesting observation by science is that when a cell from the human body is placed under a microscope, and we further look into the smallest particle of the cell, we can see that it is composed of atoms that contain neutrons, electrons, protons, and photons until finally science talks of something called "Wave–Particle Duality." It is said that while a scientist was looking at a smallest particle under a microscope, the particle suddenly disappeared and became an energy wave. He was shocked, absolutely bewildered. He realized that the particle that had become a wave became a particle once again. What does this mean? It meant that matter became energy and energy became matter. It went back to the Einstein's theory of $E = mc^2$ getting proved under the microscope. Scientists sat together and pondered if the tiniest particle of our cell is nothing but energy. We are not this body that we seem to look like! We are a cumulation of trillions and trillions of atoms, photons, electrons, protons, and waves – energy waves that actually look like this

physical body, when in reality we are not actually this physical body. We are just Energy!

When I put all the facts together, it seemed quite like my spiritual realization. What did Science have to say on the findings of my Search… Talaash? I had to evaluate my new learning based on scientific research as well because we live in a time where science has touched the life of human beings in all aspects. And I was totally amazed with the outcome of the research.

- Science talks about Big Bang but it does not talk of a Creator. Spirituality accepts God and talks about everything appearing as a manifestation.
- Science goes round in circles. For instance, what came first – chicken or egg? Spirituality understands that everything is a simultaneous manifestation of God.
- Science questions, "Of what material was the Universe made and where did the material come from?" Spirituality understands that it is all a manifestation of God.
- Science is amazed by the Universe. Spirituality is amazed by God.
- Science wants proof to believe in the existence of God. Spirituality believes that God is everywhere.
- Science initially believed that we were matter. Now, Science believes we are Energy ($E = mc^2$). Spirituality has always said that we are the Soul, the Energy.
- Science believes that we are born as a small child

and we grow till we die. Spirituality believes that we do not grow; only the body grows, and we are inhabitants of the body.

- Science believes that there is birth and death. Spirituality says that we are immortal. Death is only a bend to transcend.
- Science tried to create Higgs Boson and named it God Particle. Spirituality always believed that everything is God.
- Science uses the method of invention and discovery. Spirituality uses the method of realization.
- Science always looks outside for any findings. Spirituality insists of going within.
- Science studies the physical world and does experiments. Spirituality discovers the Spirit world through realization.
- Science uses the intellect and the brain, to create the plane and the train. Spirituality asks "Who created the brain?"
- Science now accepts that everything is Energy. Spirituality always emphasized on Consciousness as the ultimate reality.
- Science now believes that we do not know 99.9% of the Universe. We know only 0.1% of it. Spirituality always says that God is beyond comprehension.
- Science is based on questioning. Spirituality is about surrendering.
- Science created the law of cause and effect but never could answer the question, "If the universe is the effect, then what is the cause?" Spirituality explains

God as the Creator, which is the cause, and the universe as the effect.

- Science says that we are the subject and what we see is the object. Spirituality goes a step further. It says we are the object, and the mind is the subject. Further, the mind becomes the object because the Soul is the subject.
- Science now agrees that we are not the body, but we are the Energy. Spirituality states that everything is an illusion: *I am That, not This.*
- Science now believes what we take from the Universe – (oxygen, food) becomes 'us'. Spirituality insists in oneness; in simple words, you and I are the same.
- Science can count the number of seeds in an apple. Spirituality knows that we can never count the number of apples in one seed.
- Science only believes in the waking world. Spirituality accepts the dream world and the deep sleep world along with the waking world that takes them to the fourth state of consciousness.
- Science acknowledges miracles as physical phenomenon that cannot be explained. Spirituality admits that the God Power within can do anything.
- Science has been proved wrong in the past. For instance, initially, science believed that the Earth was static and the sun and the moon goes around the Earth because that was what they saw until they discovered the truth. Spirituality goes by the spiritual intuitions that come from within and that

do not need any proof. It comes from realization.

- Science looks at what happens and tries to give meaning to it. Spirituality accepts whatever happens as having some meaning and purpose of the Supreme Power.

Thus, very interestingly, science is discovering things that spiritual Masters stated thousands of years ago. The only difference is that the spiritual Masters stated it intuitively, and the scientists are now scientifically proving what they had said to be true.

I concluded my study about "Science and Spirituality" as subjects that were poles apart centuries ago. But today they are two sides of the same coin. Both are now coming to believe the same truth that we are nothing but Energy! We are nothing but the Atman, or the Spirit, the Soul. The only difference that still seems to differentiate the two is that Spirituality believes in a Creator whom we call God while Science terms this as Energy.

A day will soon come when science would discover that without God, all these discoveries are not possible. Spiritualists already know that God is everything! The spiritualists have surrendered their ego to a Power beyond human comprehension. Scientists have just that one step to take.

CHAPTER 11

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Based on the knowledge and wisdom that I had acquired in the last 25 months, I did something very different. I told God, "I am nothing. You are everything. I am like a flute, but you are the one who plays the music. The pleasure that I received in all the 25 years of achievement was all because of your grace. It was YOU in the form of my Guru who helped me transform my life to RVM and gave me contentment and fulfillment for 8 years like I had never experienced before. I thought I was the happiest man on Earth, and I would have lived and died with that belief. But it is your kind grace that made me embark on the journey to the third peak of happiness. I surrender myself to you. If it be thy will, help me discover the truth. Bless me to realize the Third Peak!"

I was in the mountains for 2 weeks, alone but in Yoga – Union with God. It didn't matter what I ate, what I wore, or where I went. I was in silence, constantly connected, and communication with the world was practically shut off.

What helped me in my search in those days up in the mountains?

Beyond just understanding, I realized the truth of the words: *Not this, not this. I am not this. I am that.* I realized that this body that we seem to be is not what we are. We are the *Atman,* the Divine Soul.

The body is made up of the following:

- The gross body that dies
- The subtle body that is the inner instrument consisting of the mind, memory, intellect, and ego that is reborn again and again
- The casual body, the ignorance that is the cause of our rebirth

I was absolutely convinced of this truth and strongly believed that I was the Divine Soul, not the body.

I had always believed in the law of karma and how the inner instrument would be reborn as per its past actions and that the cycle of death and rebirth would continue until liberation. Now, I realized that the goal of life was not just to be happy, but beyond to attain Liberation, *Moksha* or *Nirvana.* As long as we are reborn, we would have to suffer death. But on being liberated, we would become one with God, escaping from the cycle of death and rebirth and living in the ultimate bliss of self-realization.

I could see clearly that this world is an illusion. I logically believed that neither the chicken came first nor the egg and neither the tree came first nor the seed. I realized that everything was a simultaneous manifestation of God. In a way, it was in sync with the scientific theory of the Big Bang. Except that even the Big Bang was an act of God.

Who is God?
Where is God?
What is God?

I resigned from this trail of thought and questions with the realization that God is beyond comprehension and that heaven and hell were not physical planes of existence, but a part of the God's manifestation. Birth and death are controlled by God, and as human beings, we see life between the two. We know what happens in front of our eyes on Earth, but I realized that death was not the end. It was just a bend to transcend from this earthly journey upwards. Either of the two things would happen – we would be reborn with accumulated karmas for another experience as per God's will or we would be liberated, becoming one with God.

What gives life to our body is the soul. Many people believe that there are good souls and evil souls. But I realized that the soul is nothing but the energy that gives us life. There is only one Super Soul, one source of energy – not possibly 8 billion souls apart from the trillions of souls of other creatures. Our soul comes alive at birth and departs at death as per the will of God. There may be many presumptions about what happens between death and rebirth, but only God knows the ultimate truth. I realized that my mind was my biggest enemy. It distracted me from God and made me crave and desire for worldly things that only made the journey difficult. Every time, there was a realization, the mind would confuse me with a worldly desire. I

would start seeking pleasures and lose the sight of my true goal of life. Therefore, I learned to be in silence and meditation to quieten the mind and sublimate the senses and cravings.

After all, nothing belongs to us. We come empty handed and we go empty handed. But our ego makes us believe that we are the owners of our possessions and masters of our relationships. However, we can see at death that the departing one owns nothing nor continues a relationship with anybody.

Just like I could see someone entering the room from one door and leaving it from another door, similarly, we enter the world from one door and leave from another one. We cannot come from nowhere and go nowhere.

It is most unfortunate that we believe in rituals and superstitions and we continue to live with presumptions. We create our personality traits. Sure, we have no control of where we were born, when we were born, and what we became in our pre-teens of our life. These were probably the effect of our past actions. But once we come alive with our intellect, we are capable of distinguishing between the right and wrong, and the real and the unreal, and we must choose the right path. But in this initial part of our life, our personality seems predestined. All these realizations only made me believe further in the truth that was crystallizing in my mind.

By now I realized that we are immortal souls who were having a human experience on Earth. We are a tiny God particle that forgets that our source is God. We are like the wave that thinks it is the wave, not realizing that it is actually the ocean. It just appears as the wave, but in moments becomes one with the ocean. We all seem to fight for superiority; just like the clay elephant fights with the clay mouse on who is stronger until the potter immerses both of them in the water, which makes them realize that both are just clay. If a gold bangle was to be asked the question, "What are you?", it could either say "I am the bangle" or "I am gold". The moment it is melted and made into a chain, it can no more say, "I am the bangle", but it has to say, "I am gold" because that is its true identity. We too have a true identity that we often forget about as we think we are what we appear to be.

All these realizations were clearly in front of me, but the mind did not allow me to see the entire picture; it refused to put in place the missing parts of the jigsaw puzzle. Most of my questions were answered, but still there was some fog. I prayed in surrender.

It was on 31st August 2014 when I was on an Air France flight AF192 from Paris to Bangalore, it seemed that I had finally got all the answers. Surely the *Talaash* and the realization was a process that happened bit by bit. The knowledge was accumulating, but I was not able to see the entire picture as one clear image. On this non-stop 8-hour flight, by doing nothing else, except

discovering the truth, I was steadfast in my search, very persistent and committed. I was not ready to quit. And it all appeared, as if it was a vision from God!

All those days I would sit in deep concentration and introspection, but I was not spared by the clutter and disturbances of my normal living. My mind would jump like a monkey only to find myself stressed, disturbed, and confused. But on this flight, I told the hostess I needed nothing and requested not to be disturbed. And so I grasped the vision in solitude, in focus, in total Yoga or Union, and in connectivity with God.

Before the realization, I could feel that something was missing. I had realized that I was not the body, but I am the Soul, the Divine Spirit; however, I didn't have the answers to all my questions.

My questions still remained: Who is God? Where is God? I needed answers. It was fine that I had realized – *Not this, not this. I'm not this body.* I'm not this mind. I am the Divine Soul. But then where was the real God that I was seeking?

So many concepts got clarity because of my study in the months that preceded this.

Are we the body? No. We cannot be the body because the body is ever changing. Our cells are dying every day and our body is being reconstituted. So we are not the

body. We are something else. When we are born, we are born as a small baby. We are that, aren't we? Then, what makes us grow as an infant into a big adult? How do we grow? It is so simple. It is because of the food we eat. The food that comes from the atmosphere, from the Earth, and from the environment gets converted into our body. So, does it mean that all the food that we eat is our body? No, of course not. We evolve from a tiny body that grows, but we are surely not the body. If we had been the body, then we would be nothing but bread and rice.

Are we the mind? The mind includes the brain that thinks. It is also the memory, the intellect, and the ego. Because of the extensive and intensive study, I realized that we were not even the mind and its constituents. These were together referred to as the subtle body, or the inner instrument. The ego had made me believe that I was the mind. This was because I had not found out the truth about God. I still believed God to be a distant unknown entity and so my *Talaash,* my search, was incomplete.

Yes, I believed that we were the soul and that there was reincarnation and it was based on our karma, our actions. The law of cause and effect did exist.

Some of my questions had been answered but some remain unanswered. I still wasn't clear where I essentially came from. Sure. I was the *Atman* or the Soul and I was governed by karma, the law of cause and

effect. But how did all this actually happen? How was the universe created? I wasn't clear. What is the ultimate end? Birth, death, rebirth, death and finally what? I was still grappling. I had some fair ideas about it all but I realize now that my mind was playing tricks then, not letting me put my thoughts and understanding together. My mind did not want me to realize the truth and I could not understand why. I was trying so hard to find the answer to this life equation.

In December 2013, Dada, who is my Guru, my mentor and life coach, had sent me an equation, but I was struggling to realize its true meaning. The equation was: Man minus Self is equal to God. God plus self is equal to man.

Man – Self = GOD
GOD + Self = Man

What did this mean?

When I had questioned my Guru provokingly for the truth, he calmly explained to me that this path to God-realization is endless, and first, we have to transcend the mind. We have to detach ourselves from the mind. If we listen to the mind, we cannot realize the truth. The mind will ask many questions – questions that cannot be answered with words because the focus is not to discover answers but to realize the truth. The mind purposely asks questions that create confusion further and complicate our understanding. It does not want us

to realize the truth. Our goal is to realize God. "What is God?" – This is a question that cannot be answered in words. God is to be realized. For this, we must live a life of spiritual devotion and dedication by practicing the prescribed disciplines. We have to seek God and nothing else. We must shed tears in love of God. We must be passionately obsessed with our search for truth. Out of the very depth of our heart should come the aspiration, "Life without Thee Oh Lord is futile!"

It is this intense yearning that when stirred, wakes up in the heart within and makes us forget ourselves completely. This is essential. When we forget ourselves, we find God. My Guru said this intense yearning can be described as this triple longing: A longing a miser has for gold. The yearning a lover has for their beloved. The yearning a child has for its mother whom he has lost somewhere. This triple yearning is needed to draw us closer to God. We must constantly aspire for God. When it is His divine will, only then shall we realize God.

I read this again and again but couldn't get to its deeper meaning. But on 31st August, on this blessed flight, it seemed like I could see through each word. I suddenly understood the picture. I realized my true self!

What happened? How did the realization come about? I learned that the process of realization has a few steps. First, to understand what we are not. We are neither this body nor this mind. Next, we need to understand what

we are. We are the energy, the *Prana* or *Atman* – the Spirit or Soul. This is not enough. We need to go deeper and deeper to understand the details of our body constitution, which I did. But unless we realize who we truly are, the realization or even the knowledge of realization, as I call it, cannot happen. Of course, it needs the grace of God to happen. Without God's grace, this will simply not happen!

Our ego always makes us believe that I am 'I', which means 'I' am this person with a name, a form, a shape, a title, and an identity. So our ego destroys our ability to realize the truth. With the grace of God, we realize that we are not this body, this person, or this form, and that this is just like a garment that we wear. We are the energy within. Soon we must leave this body and adorn another. But who is that which adorns this body and will adorn the next one. It's the ego that leads the inner instrument. The ego, like a coin, has two sides. One side believes it's the ego with a body–mind. But the truth is on the other side. We are a soul that just gives life to the ego and body–mind.

If we realize the truth, then we are no more the egocentric body–mind. We are just the Spirit, the Soul, or the *Atman.* This is the basic knowledge of self-realization – to realize "I am not this. I am that. I am not this body. I am that Soul." On realization, many new realizations happen, which together help us realize God. But first, it's the knowledge of the self that comes as a realization. We are not the ego, but we are the Divine Soul!

We realize that we are a Soul that energizes the body. We realize that we are not the body–mind complex. We are just an ego-driven entity, which on true and full realization stops existing as the person it was. It realizes the truth of the self and continues on the path to realize God. The wave that always believed "I am a wave" realizes that I am not a wave. I am the ocean.

Sometimes, just reading the above one time may not work. One may have to read it ten times or even more, but the true aspirant, with God's grace, will ultimately realize the truth of the self.

What created this magic? It was the 31st of August, and I was on this flight. What was it that made it possible to have all my questions answered? It was the grace of God!

I was looking at these nine questions, and one by one, the answers were revealed to me.

1. What is life? Where do we come from?

Birth happens when the causal body and the subtle body take another form of life on Earth as per the accumulated karma and the divine will. Each of us is born based on our past actions, our past karmas. When we finish one human experience after our death on Earth, after our physical body is left behind, the subtle body led by the ego, mind, memory, and intellect consumes its karmas by choosing the next life. It is our

karmas that decide what we are born as, where we are born, when we are born, and to whom we are born. All these do not happen by chance but happens according to the law of cause and effect, action and reaction. Our past karmas let our subtle body choose the birth in the astral world. One realizes this only when one realizes the entire picture of life.

2. What is death? Where will we go after death?

At a destined moment, the *Atman* or God power leaves the body to disintegrate. This is death. Thereafter, one of the following two things happen – another rebirth or the Soul becomes one with God. As long as the Soul gives power to the body, we live. The moment the *Atman* or Soul leaves, the physical body dies. But the subtle body led by the ego–mind complex does not die. That subtle body goes on.

3. Who is God, where is God, and what is God?

God is the Creator, the Master who is beyond human comprehension. He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient. That is, He is all-powerful, He is present everywhere, and He knows everything!

4. Is heaven and hell real?

Heaven and hell are not physical domains in time and space. They seem to be spiritual concepts that exist to fulfill the plan of the Divine Master. Contrary to popular belief that heaven is a place we would go to and

so is hell, realization tells us that this physical body is left on the Earth. So, where is the question of heaven and hell being real physical domains? Heaven or hell is a subtle or virtual destination that seems to be a market where we transact our Karmas with a new birth. It seems to be a place where we temporarily enjoy our good actions and deeds of the past and pay for our actions and deeds before we finally decide to take a new journey on the Earth to redeem our good or bad karmas.

5. Is there life after death?

Everybody disintegrates at death, and unless the self realizes the truth, the subtle body gets reborn so that it can fulfill the law of cause and effect or karma. Every normal human being who lives and dies will be reborn because an individual has got a balance of Karmas – good or bad – that has to be adjusted in this plan of God. Therefore, there would be another life after death. The life would be for the subtle body that is led by the ego, mind, intellect, and memory and not for the gross body that is left behind on the Earth. This inner instrument or the subtle body has to be reborn after the physical death of the gross body, as per the plan of the Creator.

6. Is there a Soul? What is it?

Yes, the Soul or the Spirit or the *Atman* exists in every human being. It is the true self and also a particle of God. It is a source energy that gives life to all. People get confused thinking that their Soul is an individual Soul.

Therefore, it is thought of as "This is my Soul and that is your Soul, and there are good Souls and bad Souls." But in reality, there is just one Soul. We are the *Atman.* But there is one *Paramatman* – a Supreme Soul or the Supreme Energy – which is the Energy that exists in every being and in everything!

7. What is the law of Karma? Is it real?

The law of karma states, "As you sow, so shall you reap". Every action of a human being is recorded and as per the action – good or bad – the future destiny of the person unfolds, be it in this lifetime or the next journey of life or thereafter.

8. What is the purpose of life?

The purpose of life is to realize God by realizing the self. On true realization, a human being becomes a Liberated Soul although alive in a physical body. Contrary to the common belief that the purpose of life is just happiness, a realized soul realizes the true purpose to get to the truth of "Who am I?": I am not this body; I am neither the mind nor the intellect. I am that Power, that Energy – the Divine Soul. This realization is the true purpose of life.

9. What is Enlightenment?

Enlightenment is also known as *Liberation, Moksha, Mukti,* or *Nirvana.* It happens when a realized soul totally realizes the truth that he is the *Atman,* the Soul,

not the mind, body, and intellect. By this realization, he escapes from the suffering of the world by escaping from the cycle of death and rebirth. This is Enlightenment, *Moksha,* or *Nirvana!*

It was by the grace of God that before the Air France flight AF192 landed in Bangalore, on the midnight of 31st August, 2014, all the answers that I was searching for were revealed. Finally, I could see ahead of me the Third Peak of life – the Peak of ultimate Bliss – Enlightenment, with a highway that was leading to it: the path of self-realization and God-realization.

Thank You Lord!

CHAPTER 12

POST THE REALIZATION

On the 1st of September 2014, after that eventful realization in the flight, it seemed that I was no more RVM. I was the *Atman* in RVM. I no longer identified myself with the body because on the flight the day before, I realized that I was not this physical body. I was the *Atman* – the Spirit, the Soul. I realized this truth beyond any doubt!

The purpose of my life was no more to make a difference. That could continue to be the purpose of the RVM Foundation and the 300 people who worked in it because the foundation was doing great work. But on realizing the truth, I just couldn't continue doing what I was doing. I realized that I was not RVM. I did nothing. God did everything!

A caterpillar becomes a pupae and then metamorphosizes into a butterfly. I just realized that Ravi V. Melwani had transformed to RVM. And now this was a metamorphosis. RVM became AiR (*Atman* in RVM) and was flying like a butterfly. I was absolutely clear: I am not RVM, but I am the "*Atman* in RVM".

I understood that to continue living as the Soul or the *Atman,* I have to stop being RVM. I couldn't be both: one was the body–mind–intellect and the other was the Soul – both couldn't coexist. The caterpillar had to die for the butterfly to be born. RVM had to die for the *Atman* in RVM to be born. As long I was RVM, I could never be the Soul because RVM had an ego, an identity, a mind, thoughts, and cravings that would envelope the

Atman in the illusion of this world.

So what did I do? On the 1st of September 2014, I announced, "I am not RVM". I said that I would not sign anything anymore, no cheques or documents. I authorized two senior members to sign anything on my behalf and created a Power of Attorney for legal representations. Thus, I started my journey as the *Atman.* It was no simple task. After realizing that I was not the body, the mind, and the intellect, to still live in the environment of RVM was very challenging!

One thing was clear though – that while I was the *Atman,* I was still the *Atman* in RVM. The *Atman* had to exist in the same body. It could not exist or manifest itself without the human form. God has created in such a way that even realized souls must continue to live in the human form until death.

RVM was the CEO and the managing trustee of the RVM Foundation. We run a free charitable hospital, free charitable homes, the RVM School of Inspiration, the Shiva Temple, and the Kemp Fort Mall. Over 300 people are employed in our organization, and RVM heads the organization. It now meant delegation. I could not just abdicate, dump everything, and walk away. It would negatively impact the 700 destitute residents in our humanitarian institutions and the 300 families that depended on us. But the process had started.

By now, I had already started my life of renunciation. Once, I used to crave for a masala dosa, a south Indian delicacy, and many other foods. I had already given up these on starting the journey. But now, I decided to give up further. Since I was not the body–mind, I decided to give up all cravings and all desires of the body and mind, be it wealth, women, wine, or anything else for that matter. This was quite challenging and not as easy as it sounds because while I had realized the truth that I was the Soul, the *Atman,* I was still in the physical form. I was still under the control of my mind that was wandering and my senses that were craving, and there was a tug of war between the two. I planned to give up wearing colorful clothes, personally handling cash, and even wanted to stop using the mobile phone, though at this stage it seemed impossible. But my resolve to renounce was absolute. I knew that true happiness doesn't come from all of these. It came from being in *yoga* – Union with God, surrendering to God's will and being his instrument, doing his work. I did realize though that Liberation meant freedom in action, not freedom from action.

I started waking up before 5:00 am every morning, spending a few hours at dawn in silence, just communicating with God. Messages came, as if from nowhere, guiding my way forward. Since I had stopped doing all the RVM-related work, I was free to do the work of the Soul.

However, I still found it difficult to be the Soul. I used to

come to RVM's office every morning, sit on RVM's chair, and everybody used to call me RVM. So though I knew that I was not RVM, everybody called me RVM, and this was a dichotomy. I decided to move from the RVM office into a new office that I envisaged as Nirvana, an office that could help me live a life of self-realization.

As I attempted to be the Soul, RVM coexisted. The world knew me as RVM. My family and my friends weren't aware of the second transformation, the metamorphosis that was happening in me. Therefore, there was a constant tug of war between RVM and the Soul in RVM, each one pulling in opposite directions. I was clear. Till September 2014, I had never believed that my life would experience another change in name and identity. It was crazy for me to imagine a second transformation. But the metamorphosis had taken place. I was no more the Ravi V. Melwani caterpillar nor the RVM pupa; I was a butterfly in flight as the immortal Soul. How could I ever go back to being RVM?

Suddenly, my devotion for God, which was already so strong, evolved to deeper love and longing for the Divine Master. I felt like a thirsty wave that was seeking the ocean.

What am I without thee?
I am not, alone thou art.
I am nothing, you are everything.

These thoughts played in my mind as I started living as the *Atman.*

Several days passed, and I found that my intellect had come alive. Every time I was confronted with a situation, I had to make a choice to do it the RVM way or the way of the *Atman,* the Soul. Since I was the *Atman,* I stopped doing everything that RVM would do, though there were few things that I was forced to continue doing as I was pulled by the body and mind. My intellect seemed to be now under the command of my soul and not my ego, which was its previous master.

As the weeks went by in the life of the Soul, I had to control the mind. If it wandered, I gently brought it back. I had to control my senses by the simple realization that I am not the body. Most cravings had already dropped, but if any desires surfaced, they were transcended and sublimated by the *Atman.* I started living very differently because I knew that nothing matters. Everything is an illusion. Therefore, I lived with forbearance, reacting positively at all times, and with the acceptance of God's will and endurance when anything unpleasant happened, knowing that this was just one episode in the drama of life and it would soon pass.

My faith reached a new peak as I started living in total surrender. I considered myself to be an inert flute; God played his beautiful music through me. I realized that I was doing nothing, and He was doing everything through this body.

My life was very focused and single-pointed. As I spent hours in silence and in meditation, I was able to live with peace and bliss I had never experienced before.

I wondered if my life would become mundane or boring without much action. But as I surrendered to God, he directed me to act. One such direction was to help people realize God. So I started writing my experiences of this realization so that I could share it with others. I was still busy writing bhajans or devotional songs, singing, meditating, and following God's will.

The hours spent in silence were amazing! I could never do it before. I always felt that it was a waste of time. But now, it was such a blissful experience. It felt like I was romancing with God, enjoying the breeze and the swaying of the trees. I started experiencing the fourth state of consciousness, the true self, as I watched my body not as 'me', but rather as a vehicle I was using for this journey of realization.

I stopped searching for books to read because I felt that all these were no more a priority. However, books would land on my table as if sent by God, and I would read them. I still continued to watch videos on the Internet and hear talks, but it seemed that these came my way more as a refresher. It was no more my search for knowledge. That was over! I knew that I was on a path of liberation. My objective now was to realize God, nothing else. I would ponder for hours on the God

inside my heart and the God outside and how absolutely amazing the Omnipresent Creator is.

As I kept living as the *Atman,* the biggest challenge was to stop the clutter that was thrown at me. I still lived in a body that had a mind and senses. This was very challenging. People would approach me for silly reasons and disturb me as if I was RVM. I had to make a formal announcement that I was not RVM and that the RVM Foundation would be managed by the RVM board of trustees and that nobody should disturb me.

I met my Guru several times and shared my journey with him as it unfolded. A few months earlier, he had warned me that the knowledge of realization is not realization. But now, even he could see the transformation in me. He still warned me that I would be attacked by the world, desires, cravings, and expectations. He said that a realized soul is not excused from the onslaught of these enemies and we must be ever aware of who we are. He was correct as I experienced the attacks by the body and mind on the Soul. The only way to live this life of realization is to live like a tortoise that has its limbs outside its shell but as soon as it sees the enemy approach, it would shrink inside its shell to protect itself. And so, like the tortoise, I had to use my intellect and withdraw whenever there were distractions and attractions that attacked me in my day-to-day life.

I even asked my Mentor whether it was time for me to

renounce the world and go into the mountains. He smiled me and told that I was meant to live as Raja Janak. Janak was known to be a realized soul, but he was also a king. Although he lived in a palace, he knew that nothing belonged to him. He lived a life of renunciation and detachment. Even though it appeared that he was in a lake that was filthy and dirty, he lived as a beautiful lotus above the waters. He was like a boat on the river of life, never going below the surface. His boat always traveled on the water, heading towards the destination of Liberation. I too started living the Raja Janak way. God had blessed me with so many skills, and I believed that it was God's will that I continue to do the good work that I had started. Going into the mountains was not the way; I could realize God here as much as I could in the mountains.

I introspected further. Why do monks renounce the world? Is it because they are unable to control the mind and senses while living in the world? So many give up everything and try to live in solitude. Some are fortunate to spend time in *yoga,* connecting with God, but some live a frustrated life, up in the mountains or in the forest.

I then went on to realize something very important.

We are all born with a personality. There are many things of this life we don't choose, and seem predestined. We don't choose our gender – male/female, the date of our birth, the place of our

birth, or our birth. These are purely God's will and result of our past karmas. We are born, and we grow up. Our physical body, mind, and emotions bear a reflection of our parents and forefathers. Science explains this as the genes that we bring with us to the Earth. We have no control over this. We also have no control over our upbringing and what we were taught at home and in school. We grow up at the mercy of others. But probably a lot has to do with our karmas that influence our predestined life.

While our Soul has its own attributes and helps us live consciously, there comes a day in our life when we start our journey as a human being. Then our body, mind, intellect, habits, and beliefs take over the driver's seat and we start performing our own actions with our own free will. We choose our actions as per our thoughts. Therefore, many people do things they do because of their upbringing.

My personality made me believe that I was meant to continue doing humanitarian, inspirational, and spiritual work. It was "H.I.S" work, and I believed that God wanted me to continue doing that. I knew that I should not do it directly, but I should control the organization without ego or sense of ownership for the sake of achieving God's plan.

My attitude changed. I no more believed that it was my hospital, my home, and my temple. I could feel that I was a trustee taking care of what God wanted me to. In fact, I felt that this was a drama of God, and as my

producer and director, he wanted me to play this role on the stage of life. As a good actor, I complied, doing whatever God wanted me to do with the best of my ability.

The year 2014 rolled into 2015, and my realization grew. There was no liberation from doing. I learnt that the Soul or the *Atman* has freedom in action, but not freedom from action. Every morning I woke up and started the day as the Soul. I started with silence, did bhajans and prayers, and read scriptures. God would direct me to do something, and I did my tasks as per God's directions. The cycle continued.

I had to coach people to take over the foundation and that was quite a challenge. I read more about the lives of realized souls and how they lived post the realization of the truth. It was interesting that no two realized souls lived in the same way and that each had their own personality, karmas, and spiritual journey forward. However, they all lived connected with God in renunciation, discrimination, and devotion.

Since I realized I was not the body–mind, but the soul, I also realized that I am not the doer of action. God does through me, and everything I do, I offer it to God. I seek no fruits from the results of my actions; even that belonged to God. Owing to this realization, I believed that my actions did not bear any new karma since they were not my actions. I was nothing, God was everything, and since I was not the body, I had no

karmas. I even had no duties. But those around me expected me to fulfill certain duties that benefited them. My family and my organization wanted me to do many things. I used my intellect, and chose to do what the Soul thought right, refusing all those duties that RVM should have done. I had only one duty, to fulfill God's will.

I started depriving myself of many things, but felt a resistance within. All these were beautiful creations of God. Why should I resist what God sends to me? On my visit to my Guru, he clarified. He explained that while we should not crave for anything and should not desire anything that would lead us to disappointment and pull us back into the world as the body–mind, it was perfectly OK to accept everything that comes to us as a gift from God. Any food that God sends us to our plate can be enjoyed by us. The only challenge was to use our intellect to see that it was not poison disguised as a gift, delivered to us from the illusion of the world. Therefore, I started accepting everything, but refused what I felt was not spiritual. I would often refer my confusions to God for a clarification during my silence and the answers would come, either as a passage I was reading, a message I would receive, or a thought. I viewed the world as a three-dimensional dream. Only now, I was not asleep. I was awake! But everything was just a dream. It was not eternal. It would soon be over. Only God was real! Everything else was an illusion that looked so real. I learned to close the door when I should and not let the enemy enter.

The journey continued. My challenge was to be in a state of bliss all the time. It happened, but I must admit that I had not yet escaped from the illusion of the world. Everyday something would come and pull me back into the world. The calm waters in my lake would be disturbed by ripples as the illusion would throw stones into it. I formulated a new plan, a new philosophy, and a new path that the *Atman* in RVM should follow to go forward, living in this body.

I knew that life must go on, but I had to stop living as RVM completely and live as AiR, as the *Atman* in RVM, nothing else! So, I eventually dropped the subtitle of *Atman* in RVM – and started using AiR as my new spiritual name on this amazing third journey of my life!

Don't you know yet?
It's Your Light –
the Light within
that Lights the world!

CHAPTER 13

LIVING AS A REALIZED SEEKER

"I am AiR, not '*Atman* in RVM'" – I declared, because as long as I said I was the '*Atman* in RVM', AiR had competition. There was duality between AiR and RVM. I knew if I wanted to start being AiR, I had to stop being RVM, even stop being called the "*Atman* in RVM".

My 50th year of life thus started with a new gift – a new name, AiR. People stopped calling me RVM because I was not RVM. They knew that RVM was gone and AiR was born. It was like a new life, a new journey!

By now, AiR had already realized that AiR was an *Atman,* a soul and that the *Atman* was a tiny particle of the Creator or God. I realized that everything was a manifestation of God. This whole world was an illusion. And like a dream that was very much real while it was happening, it was nothing at the end. As AiR, I knew very clearly that I was fulfilling a role given to me by God. But my mission was very clear – to realize God, not to go back to the body–mind that I was not, not to create fresh Karmas, and not to die again only to be reborn and to suffer again and again.

I stopped seeking happiness, because every time we seek happiness, we create waves of joy and sorrow. We are glad and we become sad. Why create desires that would lead to disappointments? Why seek happiness as the body–mind, which we are not?

I am the Atman.
I shall not seek happiness.
I shall just be happiness.

Thus, AiR started living in a beautiful state of everlasting bliss – a state of ultimate joy – knowing that God is everywhere, even in my heart and in every cell of my body. Everywhere!

In one of my readings, I found the story of Adi Shankaracharya going to the mountains when he was just 8 years old. And then, he met Shri Govindpada Acharya – his future Guru. The master asked him, "Who are you and what do you seek?" Adi Shankara replied:

I am not the body, I am not the mind
I am not the ego
I am not the five elements of earth, air, water, fire and space.
I am Shiva. I am Shiva. I am God.

I was so inspired by Shankara's answer, and I realized that God lived in the temple of my heart. God was everywhere. God is in everything.

Whatever I was doing, I realized I was not doing it. It was God who lived in the temple of my heart using this body as an instrument to do whatever He wanted. I had surrendered in total faith. I was just a flute and His divine music was playing through me.

AiR lives a very simple life with just one objective: To be a Liberated being. We all are human beings with a divine soul. The goal of a human being is Liberation. Liberation eventually comes when our journey is over and we transcend body and mind. However, we can also attain liberation while

alive. That is a state of a Liberated being – one who has been liberated while alive, one who has experienced a mystic death, one who knows that he is not the body–mind–intellect–ego, and one who realizes that he is the Soul, a tiny drop of the Creator. He does not seek anything and thus does not create karmas. He lives a life of renunciation in deep love and longing for God, with complete control of the mind–body cravings.

Air is also subject to the onslaught of the wandering mind and the cravings of the senses. While AiR realizes he is not the body, mind, ego, and intellect, still AiR is in the physical form of the body and is not excused from waves of physical desire that have to be subdued and transcended as AiR evolves further on the journey towards God-realization.

AiR tries to live in Yoga – in union with God, in complete awareness of the ancient wisdom of the scriptures.

This Soul is God and because AiR believes that every human being is a manifestation of God, AiR sees God in everybody and everything.

God is everywhere, in everything. Realizing this was not easy, because while God manifested as a saint, even a thief was a manifestation of God. Therefore, it was a challenge to live with the knowledge that nothing is good or bad. Everything is perfect. God has his own ways, and we are no one to judge or evaluate what God has done. We all are a manifestation of the supreme power and God lives as the soul in our hearts.

One who has realized the truth of "Not this Not this, I am

that", the Divine Soul, stops living as the body mind intellect complex. He no longer wonders what came first, the chicken or the egg. The whole world is a simultaneous manifestation of God.

I read a story in the scripture, which said that God is supposed to have said, "I am one, let me be many", and so in a flash, the whole world appeared. Science endorses this theory in its own way and calls it the Big Bang theory. The only thing that science does not state is that there is a supreme power that created the Big Bang.

I stopped to think how could the whole universe appear as a big bang, without a creator? Is it possible for the mountains and the trees, the rivers, the clouds, the birds and the animals, the plants and the trees, the insects and the human beings, each unique in its own way to have appeared without a creator or a power? I wondered in admiration!

Therefore, I continued my journey in complete amazement of God, knowing that I myself was a microcosm of the macrocosm that was God. God is in me! I had no doubt of this, just as Shankaracharya had said, "God is in me. I am a part of God".

The challenge for AiR is to live as a Liberated Soul, to be the Soul, and not be the body–mind that the Atman was manifested as. It is a tricky situation, also dangerous, for the world would try to pull the body–mind into the Illusion, offering the body all the sense pleasures. If the intellect is

weak, it would fall prey to the ego, which could let the mind–body go astray and become a prisoner of the world.

Therefore for AiR, the challenge is to live in stillness, in renunciation, with deep love and longing, and in Yoga. It is not an easy task, but once the realization comes, there is no need to suppress any feelings or cravings because these emotions are transcended and sublimated with the knowledge that we are not this body–mind but indeed the Soul. The Atman starts controlling the intellect that controls the mind and the body.

The journey now is about realizing God, spending time in communication with the power, reading scriptures that could be understood by one who is realized, knowing that we are the ultimate seer and not the eye that sees. The eye sees the object, the mind sees the eye, but we are that true self, the Soul that is watching the mind. We are the fourth state of consciousness.

The challenge for AiR is to continue to live as a realized soul, with attributes of a Liberated being, as a Yogi who is always connected to God, as one who is happy, cheerful, peaceful and tranquil, and as one who is compassionate and desireless, positive, and detached because he is awakened and lives with forbearance, contentment and fulfillment. He is liberated and lives in surrender and joyous acceptance. He is an inspired soul who lives with faith, hope, and trust. He is fearless, focused, and grateful and lives with humility. Thus, for AiR to become angry is not being AiR; there could be no negative emotions. To feel stress or to be pulled back into the world only showed that the Liberated being was losing its tug of war with the human being.

This tug of war would continue till the body drops dead as per the divine will of God. Being a Liberated being is a daily challenge for AiR, and pulling AiR into the world was the job of the world. What could help AiR be a Liberated being – nothing except the grace of God? God exists. God is everywhere. But God is beyond our comprehension. To define God is to defy God.

Trying to define God, Dada had once said that it is same as trying to see with the ears or to hear with the eyes, which is just not possible. We have no business to discover God. God will reveal himself to those He wishes in a way that He likes and at a time He thinks appropriate. We must just live in deep love and longing for the Divine Master. The only way to realize God is to realize the true self and to find God alive in the temple of our heart, and in every being and everything.

And AiR continues this amazing journey. Not just living with ultimate joy, eternal peace, bliss, contentment, and fulfillment, AiR lives as per the will of God, with a simple mission – to live the realization to help people realize the self and realize God.

"God is Truth, God is Light and God is Love that maketh everything bright!" – Dada J.P. Vaswani

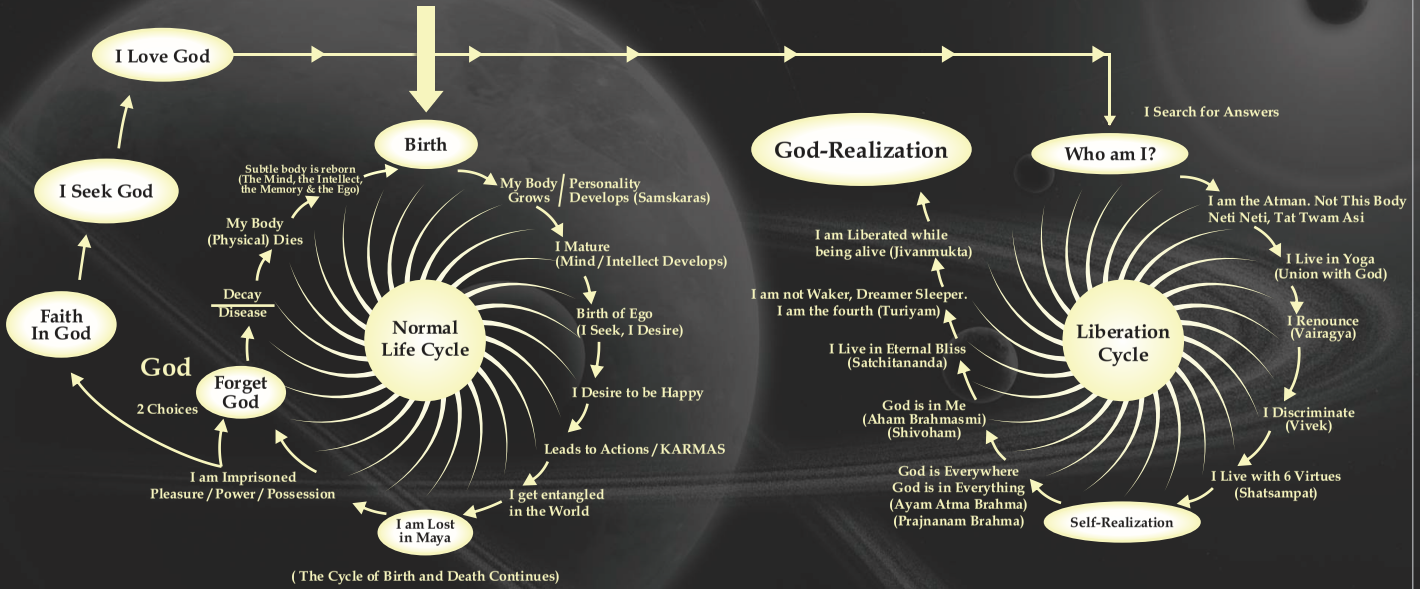
Finding is reserved for
the ones who are in a Quest –
for those who Search
for those who Seek!

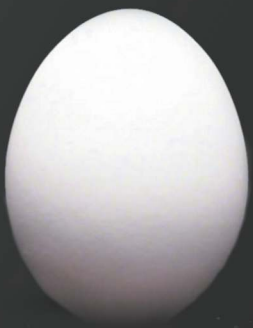
CHAPTER 14

GLIMPSES OF THE SEARCH

In my *Talaash* – my search, my quest – I came across so many profound learnings. Each of these gems has been made into a poster. The purpose of creating these posters was to give me an instant recall of what I had learned throughout my *Talaash*. These posters present all the facts about the ultimate truth in a nutshell: "I am not the body, not the mind, nor the intellect. I am the soul. I am the spirit. I am the Atman!" Also, try going through these posters after you complete reading this book. It beautifully works as a refresher of the entire journey of realization of truth!

ARE YOU SEEKING GOD ?


I Love God
I Search for Answers
Birth
God-Realization
Who am I?
I Seek God
Faith In God
God
2 Choices
Forget God
Normal Life Cycle
Liberation Cycle
Subtle body is reborn (The Mind, the Intellect, the Memory & the Ego)
My Body (Physical) Dies
Decay
Disease
My Body Grows
Personality Develops (Samskaras)
I Mature (Mind / Intellect Develops)
Birth of Ego (I Seek, I Desire)
I Desire to be Happy
Leads to Actions / KARMAS
I get entangled in the World
I am Lost in Maya
I am Imprisoned Pleasure / Power / Possession
(The Cycle of Birth and Death Continues)
I am Liberated while being alive (Jivanmukta)
I am not Waker, Dreamer Sleeper. I am the fourth (Turiyam)
I Live in Eternal Bliss (Satchitananda)
God is in Me (Aham Brahmasmi) (Shivoham)
God is Everywhere God is in Everything (Ayam Atma Brahma) (Prajnanam Brahma)
Self-Realization
I Live with 6 Virtues (Shatsampat)
I Discriminate (Vivek)
I Renounce (Vairagya)
I Live in Yoga (Union with God)
I am the Atman. Not This Body Neti Neti, Tat Twam Asi

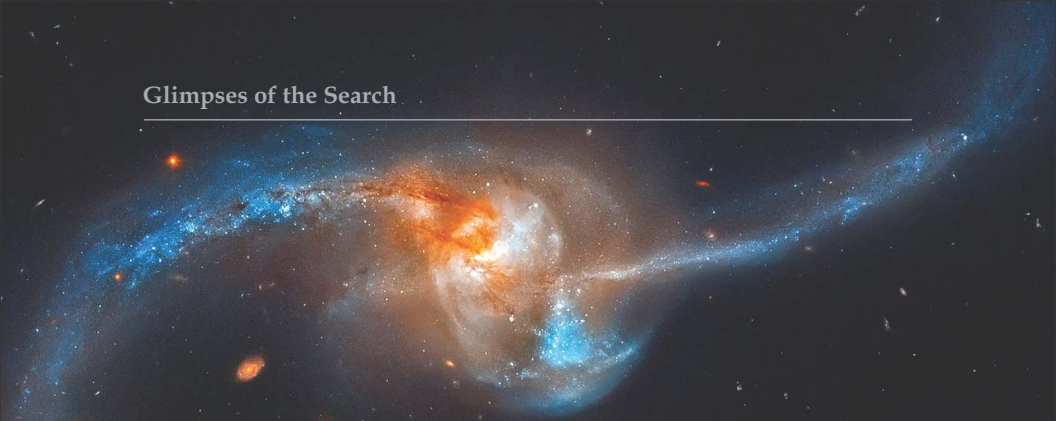


What came first - Chicken or Egg?

A CLASSIC QUESTION!
THAT HAS NO ANSWERS!!!

But Spiritualists have an answer…
Both are simultaneous manifestations of God!
The world continues to wonder…
Chicken or Egg, Tree or Seed???
They go round in circles.
The realized ones know…
Both are manifestation of God.
Science calls it the BIG BANG!

EVERYTHING IS A MANIFESTATION OF GOD.



ARE YOU SEEKING LIBERATION? IF YOUR ARE, YOU MUST PASS FOUR DOORS

The Four Doors to Liberation are:

- **Discrimination** – The Intellect helps to choose what is right over what is wrong, to differentiate between real and unreal. Unless one's intellect is sharp, one can never realize God.

- **Dispassion or Renunciation** - To realize God, one must renounce. One must renounce the desires of the senses and the cravings of the mind. We are not the body-mind. We must only desire God. We must renounce the world.

- **Six Disciplines or Six Virtues** – Control of Mind; Control over the Senses; No Cravings or Extrovertedness; Forbearance, Endurance, Acceptance; Faith & Surrender; and Absorption in Self/Silence. One must live with these six virtues if one wants to progress on the path of Liberation.

- **Deep Love & Longing for God** – Seek nothing else but God who is the Master and the Creator. One's passion and obsession for God will finally take one to Liberation.

The Power of Silent Meditation

Why should one sit in silent meditation?

Because by doing so, one can still the wandering of the mind, and one can control one's senses. With the mind and senses under control, the Spirit or the Soul can realize itself. By going within, in deep introspection and contemplation, we can realize the truth that we are not the mind that wanders, not the senses that crave. We are something else - the Energy. Often one concentrates on the breath to realize the power that gives life that goes in and out of the body. It is rare for one to sit in silent meditation because the mind will wander and take one away, the senses will distract and more often than not, one will just fall asleep. It needs a strong commitment to be in silent meditation.

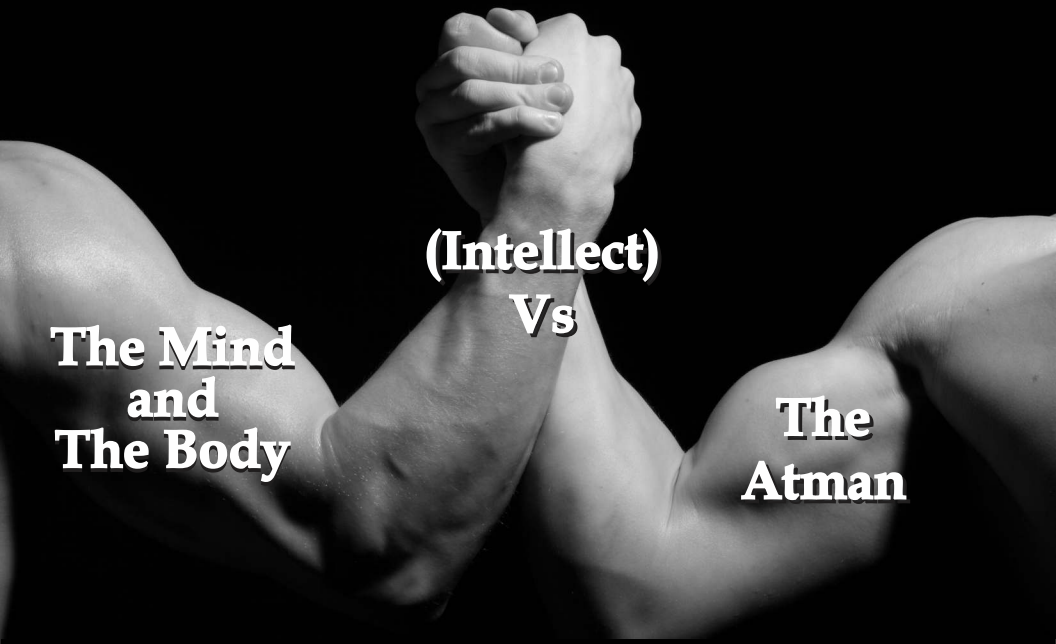
Science and Spirituality

Several years ago, there was a conflict between science and spirituality. But now science has started to understand the truth of spirituality. Over 2000 years ago, spirituality always believed that we are the spirit, the energy, not the matter we seemed to be. Science did not agree all these centuries, but now science has started to believe. When the human body was seen under the microscope and cells examined, they found that a cell has several atoms. On further examination they found that the atoms had electrons, protons and neutrons.

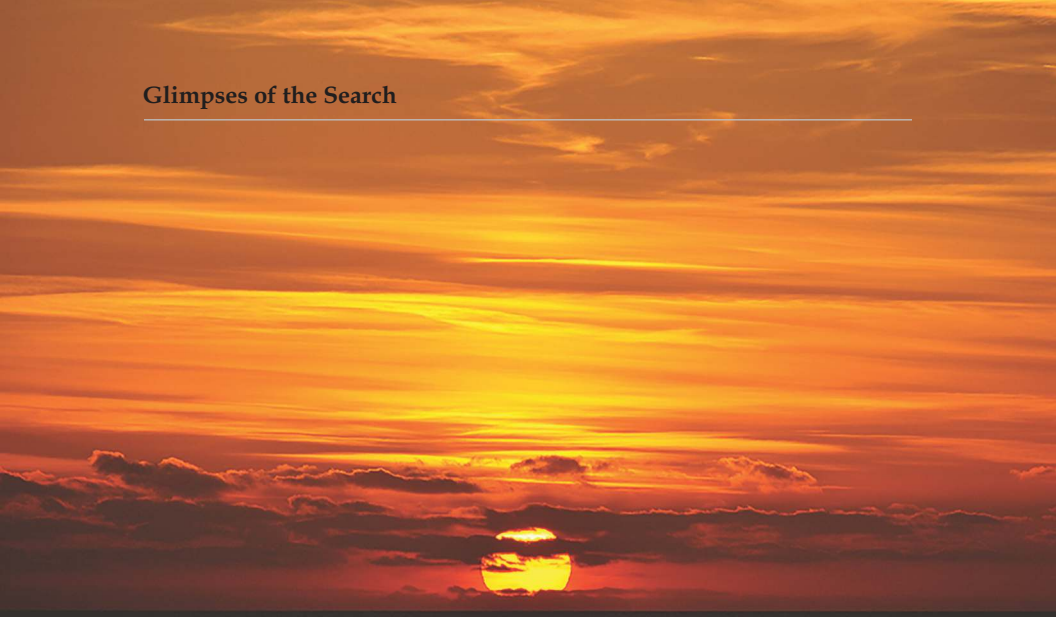
AND FINALLY ON FURTHER EXAMINATION, THEY FOUND THAT THE BODY IS ULTIMATELY NOTHING BUT ENERGY. SCIENTISTS WERE BAFFLED: HOW COME MATTER BECOMES ENERGY?

But they realized the truth of Einstein's theory of $E = mc^2$. All this goes on to prove that science is converging with spirituality. Both the set of beliefs are becoming one: We are not this mass of body that we seem to be. We are energy; we are the energy that is God.

This is the Biggest Challenge There is a constant fight between



There is a constant fight between the mind and body complex versus the *Atman* or the Soul. The mind wanders, the body craves, but the *Atman* remains its conscious self. The mind and body is pulled towards the world, the *Atman* is pulled towards God. It is the intellect that decides whether we tilt towards the body and mind or towards the *Atman*. If we tilt towards body and mind, we will never be liberated, but if the *Atman* controls the intellect and realizes that it is not the body and mind, we achieve Liberation.



The Four Principle Statements of the Upanishads

The MAHAVAKYAS in the UPANISHADS say:

Tat Twam Asi – Thou Art That

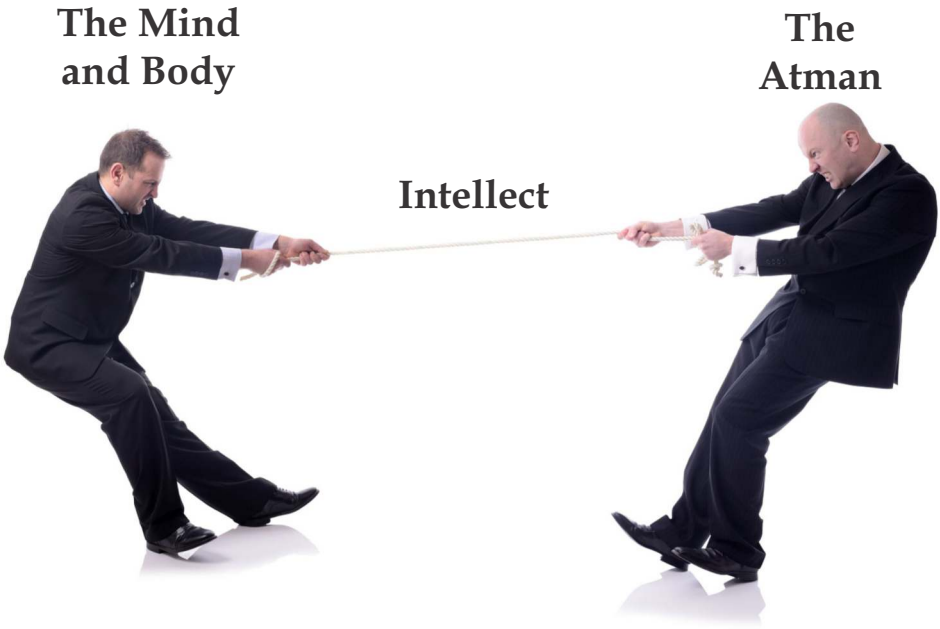
Ayam Atma Brahma – The Self is God

Aham Brahmasmi – I am God

Prajnanam Brahma – God is everywhere/in everything

We think, "We are This",
but in reality,
"We are That" –not the Body that
We look like, but a Spirit in fact!

Who is in control of the Intellect?



The intellect is one; on one side it is being controlled by the *Atman;* on the second side it is being pulled by the body-mind. If the *Atman* is in command of the intellect, then it functions as a spiritual intellect. If the body-mind is in-charge of the intellect, then it functions as a worldly intellect.

How can we end the search

without saying

Thank You

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is incomplete without this note of acknowledgement. With sincere gratitude, I wish to thank all those who have helped me make this book a reality.

How could this book ever happen without my Mentor, my Master, and my Guru, Dada J.P. Vaswani, who inspired me to write this book. My search – the quest, the Talaash – was initiated by him, and every single page has directly or indirectly captured the essence of his thoughts. I am indebted to him and grateful for his support in the publishing of this book. Dada, as we fondly call him, always inspired me to speak to other masters and mentors and to be very open in my beliefs. Therefore, various religious texts were studied before writing this book. The Hindu texts from the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Bible, the Quran, the Buddhist text, and scriptures of several religions have been meticulously studied before this book was written.

Beyond just studying the scriptures, this book has been inspired by so many religious and spiritual missions and their publications. To mention a few, the Ramakrishna Mission and books by both Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Vivekananda; the Chinmaya Mission and the books by Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Tejomayananda, and others; the Ramana Maharshi publications with so many books inspired by His Holiness Ramana Maharshi; and books from several revered Sankaracharyas right from Adi Sankaracharya's original text and the Sankaracharyas

of the various mutts have been instrumental in supporting the writing of this book. The invaluable works that are published by these religious and spiritual missions have been very helpful in understanding certain concepts and in either sharing an analogy, story, or simply a truth.

Dada always says, "I am nothing!" I am just a manifestation of the Supreme, the Lord, and so are all those who have inspired me. My Master, my Guru, himself is a manifestation of God, and I believe that God resides as a soul in all those learned authors and philosophers who have contributed through their works and teachings to the writing of this book. I am deeply grateful to all of them for inspiring me and for sharing with me their gems of knowledge that has finally made this book possible.

This book is not the work of an individual alone. It is the team effort of many people who have worked in-house with me to make this book publication worthy by creating the designs and enhancing the content. I am grateful to all those who have helped me publish this book.

Finally, I am grateful to God who through my Guru has inspired me to go on a *Talaash* and to write this book. It is with the grace of God that I may help seekers, who have a deep love and longing for God, progress on the path of seeking. Ultimately, if it be the will of the Lord, they would realize their true self and realize God.

Started with Nothing,

became Something,

achieved Everything

...only to realize

We are Nothing!

ABOUT AiR (THE AUTHOR)

AiR is a spiritual seeker who has set out to find the truth about life. He was born on October 15, 1966 in Bangalore, Karnataka as Ravi. V. Melwani. At a very young age, he mastered the craft of business and became a very successful businessman who revolutionized retailing in India with the stores Kids Kemp, Big Kids Kemp, and Kemp Fort.

After making millions, he realized that life is not just about making money. He shut down his business at the age of 40, transformed his life to RVM living by the RVM philosophy – Rejoice, Value Life, and Make a Difference and set up the RVM Foundation. He started doing H.I.S work – Humanitarian, Inspirational, and Spiritual work. His mission was to "Make a Difference" in this world before his journey was over.

As a part of RVM's humanitarian initiative, RVM Foundation Hospital was set up in 1998 with an aim to provide free medical care to the poor, destitute, and needy. The hospital, which has a capacity of 250 patients as of now, does not have cash counter. RVM Foundation also has its own destitute homes and orphanage that serve the needy, providing them free shelter, food, medical care, and clothes.

RVM, through RVM School of Inspiration, has transformed the lives of many through his motivating discourses, inspirational books and videos, and thought-provoking quotes.

RVM built a Shiva Temple in the year 1995 in Bangalore,

which is now known as the Shivoham Shiva Temple. Being an ardent believer in Lord Shiva for long, he now believes that religion is just a kindergarten of spirituality, and we all have to go beyond religion to truly realize God.

However, one day, several questions and thoughts flashed in his mind: What is the purpose of life? Is life just meant to seek happiness and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will we be reborn? Where is God? Several Questions like these took him on a Talaash or a search for the truth. He gave up his life of Achievement and Fulfillment in search of the final peak of life: "Enlightenment".

After a few years of intense search in silence, deep in the mountains, he realized that we are not this body, but we are the Atman, the Soul. Therefore, he changed his name for the second time from RVM to AiR – the Atman in RVM or (the Soul in RVM) – as realization dawned upon him that we are not this physical body, but we are the Atman. He metamorphosed to AiR and gave up his entire life as RVM. He started the study of Atman, God, and Life. This led to several realizations that formed his new mission of life – to realize God and to help Seekers realize God.

Visit Google play **or Scan the QR Code to download the AiR - Atman in RVM App.**
www.air.ind.in | air@rvm.co.in

What is the purpose of life?

Most people think that the purpose of life is to be happy. People are scrambling to achieve success after success. In the chase for money and fame, life escapes…. A few people are lucky enough to move from the journey of Achievement to the journey of Fulfillment, and they then think that they have achieved the ultimate bliss of life. But is it so? There is something beyond...

There is a third peak – the peak of eternal Happiness! Very few people, just a small fraction of humanity, go on a quest or a search for the ultimate peak of life. This book shares such a seeker's journey – a quest that will help one realize the true meaning of life!

Are you seeking eternal bliss, everlasting joy, happiness that has no bounds? Are you wanting to discover the true meaning of life? This book will show you the way.

by
AiR

AiR Foundation
Kemp Fort Mall, #97, Old Airport Road, Bangalore - 560017
www.air.ind.in | air@rvm.co.in